The Ugly Appalachian • Genealogy • The Mountain Forum • Lee Smith • An Arab in Appalachia

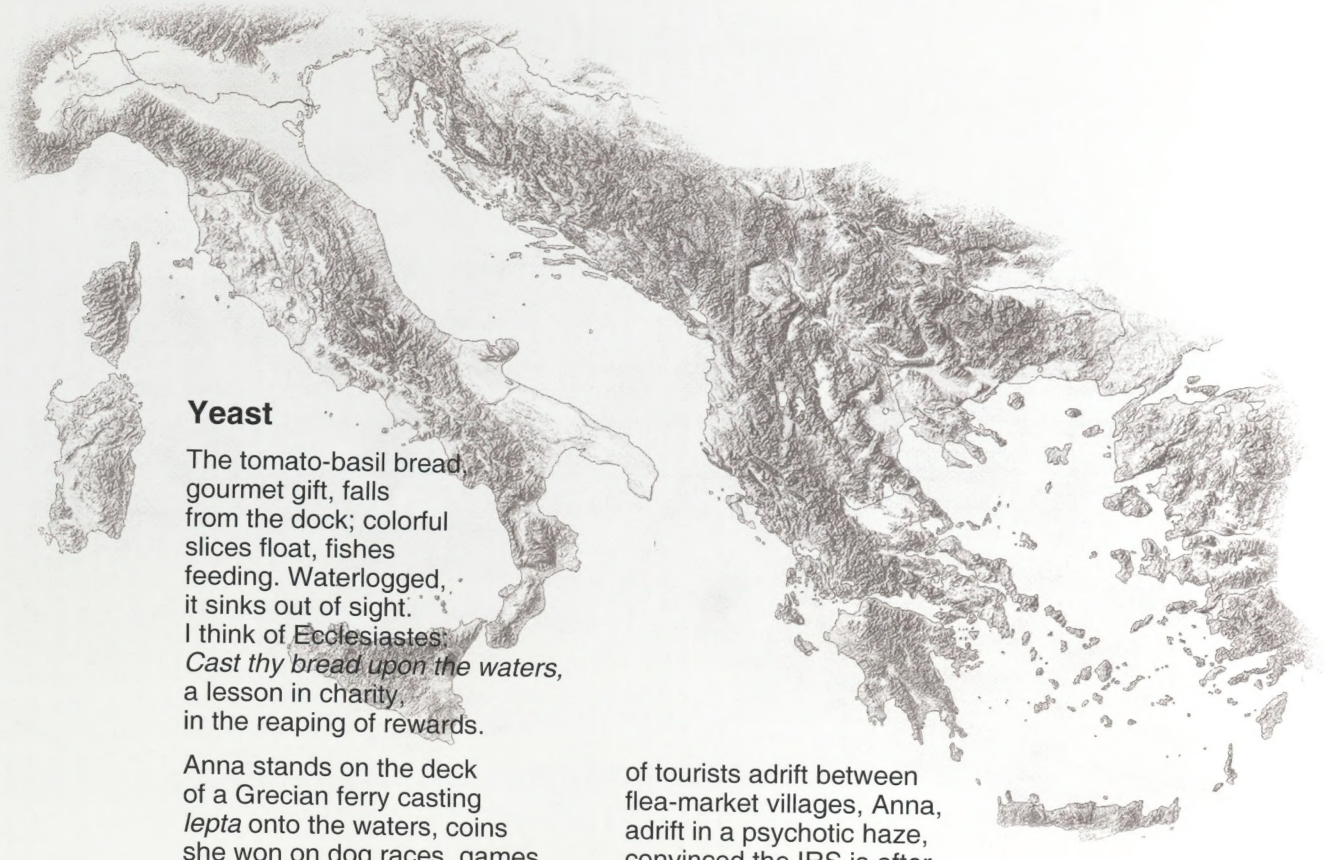
NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

THE CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES • EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Volume 19, Number 1 • $7.00

Beyond Our Borders

Appalachia and the World



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Yeast

The tomato-basil bread,
gourmet gift, falls
from the dock; colorful
slices float, fishes
feeding. Waterlogged,
it sinks out of sight.
I think of Ecclesiastes:
Cast thy bread upon the waters,
a lesson in charity,
in the reaping of rewards.

Anna stands on the deck
of a Grecian ferry casting
lepta onto the waters, coins
she won on dog races, games
of chance to assuage the ennui
of tourists adrift between
flea-market villages, Anna,
adrift in a psychotic haze,
convinced the IRS is after
her and her loot, the price
of a *baklava.* I who had urged
the witless game for tranquil
minutes spend hours assuring her
FBI, IRS, CIA, Greek agents
will not arrest her in customs.
A ten-day tour through Italy
and Greece, caring for Anna,
increasingly delusional,
I cast alms on the waters,
praying God will, in return,
release my son, in a mental
hospital for months now.

Coins gone, Anna shreds paper,
wads of *drachmas, liras,* dollars,
casts it overboard. Colorful
fragments, blowing about the deck,
scatter random spores
of madness among us.

—Elizabeth Howard

Elizabeth Howard's poetry has been published in Cumberland Poetry Review, Comstock Review, Potomac Review, *and other journals. An essay about her son's mental illness is forthcoming in* Life Stories: A Teaching Casebook *(Haworth Press).*

The "Angels of Freedom" display sits across from the temporary memorial for Flight 93 near Shanksville, Pa. The 40 red-white-and-blue slate angels, each with the name of a passenger who perished, are mounted on wooden stakes. The display was created and donated by area business owner Tammy Pearson. Photograph by Janet Frank Atkinson. Cover layout by Jon Hounshell, Hillhouse Graphic Design, Kingsport, Tenn.

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Spring 2002
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—**Bertha Honore Potter Palmer**

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ISSN No. 0896-2693

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from the dock: colorful

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release my son, in a mental
hospital for months now.

Coins gone, Anna shreds paper,
wads of *drachmas, liras,* dollars,
casts it overboard. Colorful
fragments, blowing about the deck,
scatter random spores
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Now & Then has been published three times a year since 1984 by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University. The Center is a Tennessee Center of Excellence supporting artistic, scholarly, and public service projects in the region. For membership information, visit cass.etsu.edu/member.htm, see *NewsCASS,* or write CASS/ETSU, Box 70556, ETSU, Johnson City TN 37614.

We welcome submissions of poetry, fiction, articles, personal essays, graphics, and photographs concerned with Appalachian life, past and present, if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Upcoming deadlines: Paying Tribute — July 1, 2002 (for Winter 2002), Appalachian Youth— November 1, 2002 (for Spring 2003). **Address correspondence to: *Now & Then,*** Box 70556, ETSU, Johnson City TN 37614, or e-mail: woodsidj@etsu.edu. **Send Poetry to:** Linda Parsons Marion, 2909 Fountain Park Blvd., Knoxville TN 37917. **Send reviews or suggestions for reviews to:** Marianne Worthington, Communication & Theatre Arts Dept., Cumberland College, 6000 College Station Drive, Williamsburg KY 40769. ***Now & Then*** guidelines are available on the World Wide Web at: cass.etsu.edu/n&t/guidelin.htm.

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ISSN No. 0896-2693

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Printed by B & B Printers Inc., Bristol, Tenn.

Special Thanks to: James Sequin and Phil Obermiller

Hard Lessons

It was just about a year ago that *Now & Then* poetry editor Linda Parsons Marion sent me several essays by Anwar Accawi, a native of Lebanon now living in Knoxville, Tenn. Those essays were so compelling, I did something I rarely do. Before tucking the pieces into the "Appalachia and the World" file, I actually skimmed them. Though it was far too early to make a decision, I felt pretty certain we'd find a place for "Fear" (p. 9), his vivid account of the hostility he'd encountered in rural Appalachian Tennessee during the 1991 Desert Storm campaign.

A couple of months ago, I re-read "Fear" more carefully. As I got to the end, the name Osama bin Laden sprang up from the page. Accawi's conclusion now reads like prophecy, a prediction that pales in the face of what was to come but a prophecy nonetheless: "Saddam Hussein is still in power in Iraq," he wrote. "And his ilk — Osama bin Laden, Yasser Arafat, and many others — are still doing their thing in the Middle East. And I am *here,* wondering what it is going to cost me the next time these men or their followers blow up something or kill someone we love." Even if I'd been paying the attention those words deserved, how could I ever have imagined the conflagration? How could I have known how many loved ones would be killed?

Appalachia and the World turns out to have been an unintentionally apt theme for this post-September 11 spring. Yet it is also the theme that attracted the fewest submissions of any issue I've ever edited — only about a half a dozen all told.

More than one commentator has noted that the terrorist attacks on this country blindsided and mystified many Americans; they had simply not been paying much attention to what goes on beyond their borders. Foreign affairs have typically gotten very little coverage in our media because in this market-driven economy, foreign news doesn't sell. What is true of the country as a whole is possibly even more true of this region.

Why? Some of this issue's articles suggest one of the many complex reasons behind this lack of interest in the world beyond our borders. We reside in a region and a country separated from other countries and cultures by vast expanses of space and, increasingly, by time. Even in Northern Appalachia, where 19th and early 20th century immigrants came to work in mines and factories, those immigrants' descendents, such as the narrator in the short story "Anthracite" (p. 17), increasingly gaze at their grandparents across an ever-widening cultural gulf.

In Central and Southern Appalachia, which missed out on these more recent waves of immigration, people feel even more removed from the lands of their forefathers. A family's country of origin, as Robert Liftig discovered when he married into an Eastern Kentucky family ("In Search of the Fugate Family of Lost Creek, Kentucky," p. 13), no longer matters. When you are one of the "melting pot mutts," to borrow Liftig's term, it is the Appalachian community you're from, not your ethnicity, that shapes identity. Without family ties to whatever Old Country you happen to be from, the outside world feels far away.

If this past fall has taught us nothing else, it has shown that what happens in the rest of the world can matter terribly. It's a hard lesson the citizens of the small Appalachian community of Shanksville, Pa., ("Pride and Sorrow," p. 3) learned all too well as international terrorism literally rained down on their heads in such a grotesque fashion.

Not long ago, I was cleaning out one of those catchall baskets on my dresser. Down at the bottom was a small blue ticket stub for the Top of the World observation deck, graced with a stylized picture of those two tall, thin rectangles reaching into the sky. On April 26, 1997, at precisely 2:04 p.m., my family and I started our excursion up to South Tower's rooftop.

I thought about finding that ticket the other day when I spoke to Somerset County, Pa.'s Flight 93 coordinator, Susan Hankinson. "Sometimes," she said softly, "when things slow down a bit, it's still so hard to believe that this has happened."

— Jane Harris Woodside, editor

How to Play an Appalachian Dulcimer

Love of the song keeps you
from falling below the bass notes
or flying higher than double treble.

Bite the note your teacher said
and you did. Like the time you
jumped off the hen house roof
and plucked the grass in your pain.

Think romance your teacher said.
Caution, slow-dropping hesitation;
B-minor coming in hard. Now
hope is yours for the whole song.

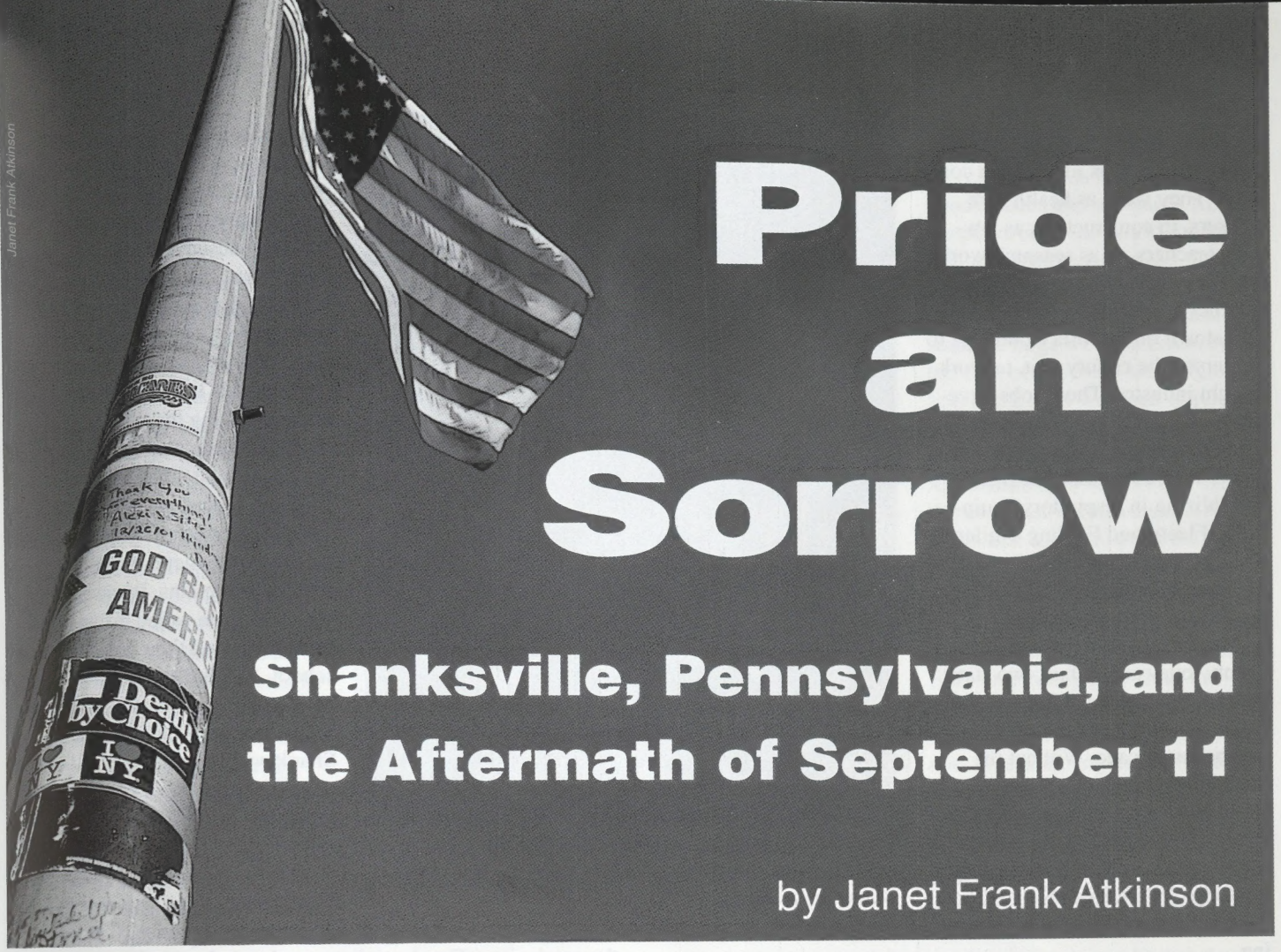
You strike passion note on note,
chord on chord, slide your strings,
pluck them, hammer them into
sounds alive as the tuned nerves
of your high-strung right hand.

Recall Scottish highlands where
pipers taught the drone to your bass,
pluck exclamations of joy
from songs of Appalachian sorrows.

Listen! If you hear someone grieving
it is the lady drowned by her lover
singing in Aeolian mode
Willy, little Willy, I fear your ways!
Slide into Ionian mode:
Possum up a 'simmon tree,
raccoon on the ground
under that laughing Kentucky sun.

— Margaret Shipley

Margaret Shipley has published two books of poems and a novel. Her work has appeared in The New Yorker, FIELD, Prairie Schooner, AGNI, The Journal, *and other periodicals, and in the anthology,* The Best American Short Stories. *A third collection of poems is in the works. Shipley played a handmade Appalachian dulcimer with a family combo, The Lonesome Polecats, who performed in the St. Louis area.*



Pride and Sorrow

Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and the Aftermath of September 11

by Janet Frank Atkinson

After United Flight 93 smashed into an abandoned coal mine in a small Appalachian Pennsylvania community, the townspeople struggle to find comfort while consoling the victims' families.

Outsiders are easily spotted in the rural town of Shanksville, Pa. Let's start with Ida's Country Store. Ida's is one of the only places in Shanksville where residents can pick up a gallon of milk without driving 30 minutes to the nearest grocery store. You see, the door to Ida's opens in. Outsiders try to pull the door open. That's a huge indication that "you're not from around here, are you?"

More outsiders have come to this Somerset County town since the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 at 10:03 a.m. on September 11, 2001, than had found their way to the community during the past several years put together. And outsiders will continue to come to this community, located in Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains about 80 miles east of Pittsburgh and 20 miles from the Pennsylvania Turnpike. They will come to pay tribute to the 40 passengers and crew members who died when the hijacked plane plummeted into a reclaimed coal strip mine about three miles outside of town during an apparent struggle between the passengers and the terrorists. The Boeing 757 is believed to have been headed toward a target in Washington, D.C., roughly 20 minutes by air from the Somerset County crash site.

Small Town Life

Before the crash, the citizens of this Appalachian community, all 245 of them, enjoyed the low-key lifestyle that comes with living in a small town. German farm families settled the area just after the Revolutionary War, and the town itself dates back to 1798 when German-born immigrant Christian Shank built a gristmill on the Stonycreek River. Over the years, Somerset County's people — mainly German, Scotch-Irish, some English, some Amish, and Eastern Europeans — made their living as many have throughout Appalachia: harvesting timber, farming, and mining coal. With the collapse of the steel and coal industries in Western Pennsylvania beginning in the late 1970s, along with the subsequent recession, the county went into serious decline. The unemployment rate peaked in 1983 at 21.4 percent.

The area has struggled back from those hard times. In 1999, the unemployment rate, while still higher than the national average, had dropped to 5.8 percent; the per capita income was $20,611, about 70 percent of the U.S. figure. Although it's certainly not a robust economy, it's a long way from the dire straits in which the coalfields found themselves during the mid-1980s.

Today, small Somerset County towns such as Shanksville are, for the most part, bedroom communities. Although some residents work on tidy dairy farms scattered throughout the roll-

ing countryside or in small family businesses such as Ida's, most commute. They work as health care workers, in construction, as lawyers, teachers, or as seasonal workers in the local ski and lakeside summer resorts. Some travel to Johnstown in Cambria County or to Somerset, the county seat, to work in light industry. Those jobs have been reasonably stable and have paid decent wages. They work in plants such as Sunrise Medical, specializing in respiratory equipment; Fleetwood Folding Trailers, which makes camping trailers; or Gilmour Manufacturing, which produces garden equipment.

The largest employers in the county today are, in fact, two state prisons, Somerset and Laurel Highlands, which opened their doors during the last decade. Without the prison population, the county's slight increase in population between 1990 and 2000 would have registered as a slight decline, pointing to the fact that some coped with the coal industry's collapse by leaving.

Janet Frank Atkinson

The site of the crash of Flight 93 has been fenced off. The bare trees had limbs sheared off as the plane came down.

Until recently, the only faces Shanksville residents were accustomed to seeing around town on a regular basis were those of people they had known all their lives. "It's a close-knit community," says James R. Oliver, a Minnesota native who came to the area in the late 1980s to assume the editorship of the county newspaper, the *Daily American.*

People tend to remain in Shanksville generation after generation. "Everybody's related to somebody," laughs Oliver. "It's amazing. You don't dare talk negatively about anybody because you're probably talking about someone's great uncle." It is a town where you marry your high school sweetheart. Folks spend Saturday afternoons or Sunday after church making the rounds to neighbors' houses for lunch. A clique of "older gentlemen" hangs out at Grimes Service Center engaged in debate, playfully teasing each other, and talking about old times. Now the group discusses how the town has claimed its place on the map and in the history books.

Total Destruction

Rick King and his wife, Tricia, bought Ida's Country Store six years ago after moving back to Shanksville from Cleveland. The fourth generation on his mother's side to live in the town, he is also the assistant chief of the volunteer fire department. He was one of the first emergency workers at the scene of the crash.

That morning, King had been watching events unfold on television in disbelief. He called his sister, who lives nearby, and as they were talking, she paused and told him she could hear a jet flying low near her house. King knew all planes had been ordered out of the sky—but he also knew some planes were missing. Seconds later, the plane hit, the impact shaking the town.

When King and his crew arrived at the crash site, they saw what smoking pieces of the plane had survived impact. "There were small pieces everywhere and small signs of human remains. It was total destruction." He called his wife and told her to pull their children out of school. "I felt the crash was too coincidental not to be related to what was going on. I didn't think Shanksville was a target of terrorist attacks. I just didn't know what was going on. I didn't know if planes would keep falling out of the sky."

Oliver remembers similar concerns at the *Daily American* office in Somerset, roughly 10 miles from the crash site. "The day it happened was the day I saw what probably bordered on panic in our office. Parents were just really frantic. We knew about the crashes in New York and the Pentagon, and we didn't know if they were after us or what. You know, irrational as that sounds, we didn't know. If you're a parent and you've got a kid in school and a plane that is part of this great international terrorist event has just crashed a few miles away, you don't think all that rationally. You want your kid home so you can keep an eye on him. So there was serious fear."

Coping With an Invasion

In the days and weeks immediately after the crash, somewhere between 1,000 and 2,000 outsiders descended on this previously peaceful area. Oliver says, "I remember hearing from one pastor from Shanksville who said, 'You don't know what it's like here. You get up in the morning, you walk out, and you've got an FBI agent wandering around in your backyard.'"

King called his sister who lives nearby, and as they were talking, she paused and told him she could hear a jet flying low near her house. He knew all planes had been ordered out of the sky—but he also knew some planes were missing.

There were the friends and families of the victims and staff people from scores of agencies, including government investigators, state and federal law enforcement, environmental agencies, and nonprofits such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. In addition, United Airlines representatives and, of course, members of the media from all over the world came to town. The workers toiled both at the primary crash site, just out-

side of Shanksville, and at secondary debris fields, such as the one at Indian Lake, an upscale resort community nearly six miles from the main crater.

Fire company members tackled brush fires and helped clean up wooded areas so investigators could do their work. Somerset County coroner Wallace Miller was in charge of the site, overseeing efforts to retrieve and identify what human remains they could and issuing death certificates. Some local people received rudimentary training in grief counseling from the Red Cross so they could work with the victims' families. Back at the firehouse, other volunteers received donations and assembled meals for workers from the foodstuffs that poured in from private citizens and local restaurants. "My favorite story was the one about the Salvation Army person who called the day after the crash and said, 'Please put in the paper that we need drinks, food, and snacks,'" recalls Oliver. "The next day she called and said, 'Please tell them to quit.'" They were just buried with food.

Janet Frank Atkinson

Color-coded tape on trees indicates that a professional has climbed up searching for plane parts and human remains.

There were hundreds of state troopers stationed around the crash site's perimeter for security reasons. Says Oliver, "They were standing out there all by themselves and, as the story goes, the next day, each one had a lawn chair, a cooler with something to drink, and a container with food in it. Everybody wanted to help in some way, and they knew they shouldn't be out there getting in the way. So they just sent food out or drinks or whatever. To me, that was the biggest story about the community. They understood there was a need, and they filled it in a way that was unobtrusive and that generally was helpful."

Paying Their Respects

"The town was quiet and peaceful," says Gary Singel, superintendent of the Shanksville-Stonycreek school district. "And then, all of the sudden, you see yourself on NBC news." Shanksville, accustomed to privacy, is learning to accept the reality that it is now a tourist attraction.

There is a temporary memorial that sits on a hilltop about 500 feet from where Flight 93 crashed. An American flag flaps in the breeze. The flagpole is slapped with stickers that capture the mood of the country: "God Bless America," "I Love New York," and "Death by Choice," presumably a reference to the passengers' decision to resist the hijackers. Many messages in black Magic Marker are also scribbled on the pole. Alexis from Pennsylvania wrote a personal message to the victims. It reads: "Thank you for everything."

A fence holds banners with condolences and messages from people around the world, in addition to wreaths, American flags, candles, and personal items left by visitors. To the left of the fence stands a large wooden cross. At the foot of the cross are religious articles: Bibles wrapped in plastic, passages from Scripture, and laminated cards about angels. Rosaries left behind by visitors sway from the crossbeam. Because of all the items that accumulate at the site, Somerset Historical Center curator Barbara Black frequently removes the artifacts in preparation for display as part of a permanent memorial. And then across from the fence and cross are the "Angels of Freedom," a field of 40 red-white-and-blue slate angels mounted on wooden stakes, each with the name of an individual who perished. The display was created and donated by Tammy Pearson, owner of a local business that sells stakes wholesale to garden and craft stores.

Recently, a plaque honoring the victims was added to the temporary memorial, listing the name of each passenger. On it appears the passage: "This memorial is in memory of the brave men and women who gave their lives to save so many others. Their courage and love of our country will be a source of strength and comfort to our great nation. God Bless America."

Thousands of visitors have come to the temporary memorial to pay their respects and to seek comfort. They talk in whispers — if they talk at all. Some take pictures. Some cry. Others look angry or saddened. Many read the passages and dedications left by others and shake their heads.

A Steady Stream of Visitors

On a warm day in January, a man sporting Ohio plates on a Chrysler 300M stops at Ida's to ask for directions to the site, a hard-to-find spot reached by roads so narrow that if a driver meets a truck going in the other direction, it's wise to stop to let it by. "I've given directions out about 100 times," says Tammy Strohm, a clerk at Ida's. Because of frequent requests, Strohm has typed directions so they're ready to hand to visitors who stop at the store. "I would tell them two rights and a left, and they'd look at me like I was speaking Greek. They're not used to country directions."

Shanksville, accustomed to privacy, is learning to accept the reality that it is now a tourist attraction.

Now, as the weather dips into winter temperatures, the flow of traffic has slowed. "It hasn't been as bad as before. We used to get at least 20 requests a day, sometimes more," reports Strohm.

Janet Frank Atkinson

Visitors pay tribute to those who died on Flight 93 at the temporary memorial at the crash site in Shanksville. Artifacts are frequently removed by the Somerset Historical Center in preparation for display in a permanent memorial.

Oliver concurs. "I went out — my one and only visit actually — on the three-month anniversary in December. I just thought maybe we ought to go out and see if anybody was there. I arrived at about 9:15 a.m. so I'd be there at the time the crash happened. This one woman was there, and after a while, an Associated Press photographer showed up. A little later, a couple of cars came. One belonged to a family who lives in the area and was taking visitors to show them the site. There were about half a dozen people. That's apparently fairly typical of the traffic out there."

The increase in traffic makes the townsfolk cautious.

"The worst thing is all the strangers in town," says Strohm. "You don't know the quality of the people in town. You used to know everyone. But for the most part," she allows, "many of the people who stop in look reputable."

Strohm's family has lived in Shanksville for at least four generations. Because of the national coverage, her family has a new identity. During a recent trip out of state, her kin introduced her family as "the relatives from Shanksville." Remembers Strohm, "We used to be the people from Pennsylvania."

Across town, which amounts to only one street over from Ida's, volunteer firefighter Frank Barta stops by the firehouse to check on things. Barta has just spent the morning turkey scouting in the countryside with 4-year-old son Andy. There has been a steady stream of activity at the station house since the crash. Before, the station house rarely received visitors. These days, says Barta, people drop by all the time, mostly for directions.

Barta, who owns a house at the edge of town, is also wary of the increase in traffic as visitors make their way through Shanksville on their way to the temporary memorial. "We used to let Andy ride his bike in front of the house. Now, we can't."

The flood of visitors has led to some exciting moments. Barta recalls the day he heard thundering engines in the distance, making their way through the back roads toward Shanksville. As the noise came closer, over 1,000 motorcycles appeared around the bend. With the drivers dressed in black leather, most with American flags flapping from the back ends of their bikes, the group looked as though they were in town to film a John Mellencamp video. They continued on to the crash site. Barta jokes he is going to install a tollgate in front of his house. "People can drop a quarter in a box, and out will pop a map."

Even though the area isn't affluent by any means, so far no one has made any major moves to exploit the tragedy for personal gain. In Oliver's opinion, "there's a real sense of respect for the victims and the victims' families. I think the local people are just concerned about doing the right thing. Everybody knows somebody who knows somebody who was one of the grief counselors. So we all kind of got tuned into the families in one way or another."

Taking It All Personally

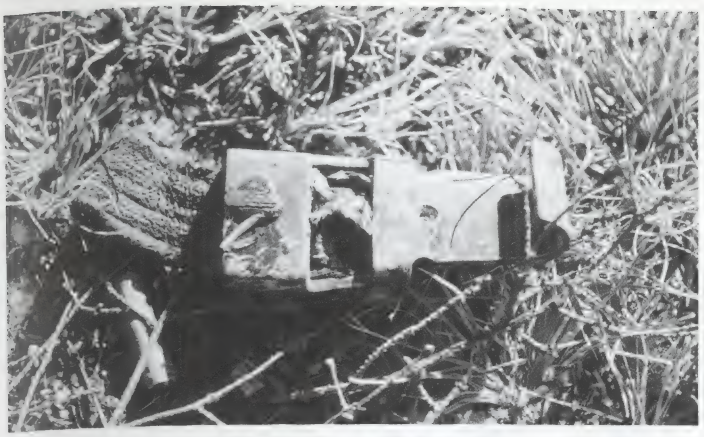
Attorney Karen Model is program coordinator for the Pennsylvania September 11 Victim Assistance program, headquartered at the offices of Network of Victims Assistance (NOVA) in Doylestown, Pa., just north of Philadelphia. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency put the program in place to offer practical aid and emotional support to family members of Flight 93's passengers and crew, along with Pennsylvania residents directly affected by the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks.

> Thousands of visitors have come to the temporary memorial to pay their respects and to seek comfort. They talk in whispers — if they talk at all.

Just days before, Model had attended the six-month anniversary memorial services at the Shanksville United Methodist Church. "The church was standing room only," she says. "The community people who were there were so incredibly receptive to the families. You know, they were hugging them and telling them that they're praying for them. They're there for them. And the families just can't thank the community enough for all the support they've given them. Every time we talk to the families, they speak so highly of the community there."

Janet Frank Atkinson

Shanksville volunteer firefighter Frank Barta checks his equipment with his son Andy.



Janet Frank Atkinson

Plane parts, such as this buckle, still litter the crash site.

She continues, "The people in Shanksville feel very close to the people who lost their loved ones on that airline flight. They feel a very personal connection. They've had the opportunity to meet these families on several occasions. It's easier when you don't have a name and a face, and now these family members all have names and faces for the people in this town. And I think that some of the people in Shanksville are tending to take on some of the families' grief themselves."

The six-month mark, says Model, feels like a turning point for many affected by the crash. Generally, up to this point, they've been busy — supporting the relief effort, filling out paperwork, meeting with people, and starting work on a permanent memorial. "When all this starts to die down, the people involved are suddenly going to realize that the grieving process hasn't even begun. It finally starts to hit you, and you suddenly feel this terrible sadness for the families. I think that's what's happening out there. The community is starting to feel that sense of sadness." In response, county-appointed Flight 93 coordinator Susan J. Hankinson is working on offering crisis counseling to community members, including the first responders and eyewitnesses. Says Model, "A woman was hanging her clothes outside and saw this plane come down. What a helpless, horrible feeling that must be. What could you possibly do? If you ran over there, there was nobody you could save."

It Doesn't Feel Like Home Anymore

Barry Hoover owns a house on the land where the plane crashed; his parents also own a weekend getaway cottage on the property. Now a fence erected by the government displaying "No Trespassing" signs encloses his property.

Before September 11, Hoover enjoyed hunting there and even welcomed others to come along. He helped his friend, David Kuhn, train Kuhn's English setter, Trooper, to hunt on Hoover's fields. In fact, just days before the crash, Hoover had spent the weekend with friends, shooting skeet and enjoying the weather. Sitting at a picnic table outside Hoover's house, Kuhn, who works at one of the local prisons, had made the comment that being on the property was very peaceful. "Nothing ever happens in Shanksville," Kuhn remembers remarking. Little did they know that the dog they'd trained to hunt for small game would soon be helping locate body parts.

Like many people on the morning of September 11, Hoover woke up and prepared for work. He pet his cat, Woody, on the way out the door and drove himself to work at his family's lumber company. Three hours later, debris from Flight 93 ripped through his house and was scattered throughout his property. The impact of the wreckage made his house structurally unsound, shifting it an inch-and-a-half off the foundation. The impact blew out windows, caused portions of the ceiling to cave in, and tossed furniture around. The explosion's force twisted the refrigerator backwards and shoved it away from the wall. Items launched from the cupboards remain on the floor. Dust, debris, and insulation cover the carpet. Woody, however, survived.

Because of the dust, ash, and contamination, Hoover has not been able to pull his possessions out of the house — nor does he want to. "Would you wear any of your clothes, even if they were dry-cleaned?" he asks. Moving items would be like upsetting a burial ground.

Needless to say, Hoover has not lived in the building since, and he does not feel as though he could ever live there again. "It feels very, very sad. It feels like going to a graveyard, a cemetery. It doesn't feel like home anymore." He had planned to live there until he died.

Hoover is renting a place while he considers where he should set up housekeeping next. He tries to keep his sense of humor and finds the town gossip about his situation amusing. "I was at a local watering hole the other day, and someone said, 'I hear they bought your property.' 'Oh,' I said, 'for how much?' Someone else said, 'I hear they're building you a log cabin.' I said, 'Oh? I hope it's nice.' " In point of fact, the only assistance he currently receives is money from his insurance company to help with temporary housing costs. Other than that, he has not asked for any form of compensation.

> "There's a real sense of respect for the victims and the victims' families. I think the local people are just concerned about doing the right thing."
>
> —James Oliver

Janet Frank Atkinson

Rick King (second from l) and other firefighters attend a screening of a documentary about September 11, *America Talks,* produced by faculty member James Seguin and students from Robert Morris University, near Pittsburgh.

Janet Frank Atkinson

Crafts and other items commemorating Flight 93, priced to recover only costs, are for sale at Ida's Country Store.

To help him through this difficult time, Hoover turns to his faith. "I'm a church-going person, and I think that helps me get through it." He says there is a positive side to his misfortune. "I am glad the plane did not stay in the air a couple more minutes. I am very happy it hit my house instead of 400 more people."

Oliver also reports realizing it all could have been much worse. "After things got sorted out and we understood what had happened, we began to get chills about what could have happened if the plane had come down a little bit to the right or a little bit to the left. If it had crashed in the middle of Shanksville, it would have taken out Shanksville. Now, that's only about 250 people, which compared to the World Trade Center is pretty small stuff. But for Somerset County, it would have just been a horrible, horrible tragedy."

A Permanent Memorial

Shanksville area residents have been working together with the families to help in the planning of a permanent memorial. In March, shortly before the six-month anniversary, Democratic U.S. Rep. John Murtha announced he would ask Congress to designate the crash site a National Park Service memorial site. The plan is to finance the memorial with private funds; approximately

> "The people in Shanksville feel very close to the people who lost their loved ones on that airline flight. They feel a very personal connection."
>
> —Karen Model

$1 million has already been raised from individual and corporate contributions to the Flight 93 Memorial Account being managed by the trust department of a Shanksville bank, the Somerset Trust Co. In addition, the proceeds of the sale of "Hearts of Steel" bracelets, fashioned out of steel donated by Allegheny Ludlum Steel and similar to Vietnam-era POW/MIA bracelets, will go to another fund, the Pittsburgh-based Flight 93 Memorial Fund. Republican state Sen. Jane Orie and other project organizers hope to raise an additional $1 million by next September.

Edward T. Linenthal, a professor of religion and American culture at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, attended one of the recent planning meetings. The author of *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory,* Linenthal says, "Shanksville is as evocative a site as the World Trade Center or the Pentagon. It is part of the constellation of 9/11 sites that will be forever linked in our memories." During his visit to the crash site, Linenthal was impressed by the field and the trees Flight 93 ripped through as it barreled down toward the ground. "The grove of trees where so much of the debris, including human remains, was found is an immensely powerful place." Linenthal was also impressed with how deeply "the people in the community feel the burden of deciding how to honor appropriately those who were murdered."

Oliver has sent reporters to cover these planning meetings. Like Linenthal, he is struck by how concerned the local citizens are that the memorial be "a tasteful memorial to some very brave people. I think some of the people out there are concerned it's going to turn into another Gettysburg." Located less than 200 miles to the east, Gettysburg, Pa. — with its chaotic thicket of motels, restaurants, commercial attractions, and shops full of cheap trinkets adjoining the Civil War battlefield — provides an object lesson in how not to memorialize a national tragedy. "I don't think that's ever really going to happen here," says Oliver, "because, you know, Shanksville's just the place where the plane came down. It's not a place where you'd come and spend the weekend. But regardless, people don't want anything garish. They're very concerned about having input from the families of the victims. They're very touchy about it."

The daunting task memorial planners face is to transform the site of such gruesome carnage into a graveyard, a final resting-place. "Based on what I'm hearing from a lot of the families," reports Model, "they want a place to go where they can find comfort. And the community needs that too. If they feel there's a place where the victims' families can find peace and comfort, I think they'll be comforted as well."

Healing

Before September 11, 2001, Shanksville's story could well have been the story of countless small rural communities up and down the Appalachian Mountain chain. Its citizens farmed, made their living for a time from boom-and-bust extractive industries, watched coal mining jobs evaporate, and struggled back from hard times. They are people who have lived in a community of interrelated families who've been neighbors for generations.

That story took a bizarre turn when strangers from half a world away set their carefully coordinated plans in motion. Now the people of Shanksville will have to draw on the strength that comes from living in a closely-knit mountain community as they heal from the national trauma they were forced, so improbably, to witness firsthand. N&T

For information about the Flight 93 Memorial Account, visit www.flt93memorial.org/. For more information about the Hearts of Steel bracelet project, go to www.heartsofsteel.com.

Janet Frank Atkinson is a freelance writer based in Pittsburgh, Pa., specializing in nonfiction and business writing. Her writing has been featured in the Pittsburgh-Post Gazette, The Server Food Service News, *and* Pittsburgh Business Times. *Additional clips can be viewed at www.jfatkinson.com.*

Fear

by Anwar F. Accawi

As Desert Shield turns into Desert Storm, a Lebanese man fears his East Tennessee neighbors will try to make him pay for the evil perpetrated by the Husseins and bin Ladins of the world.

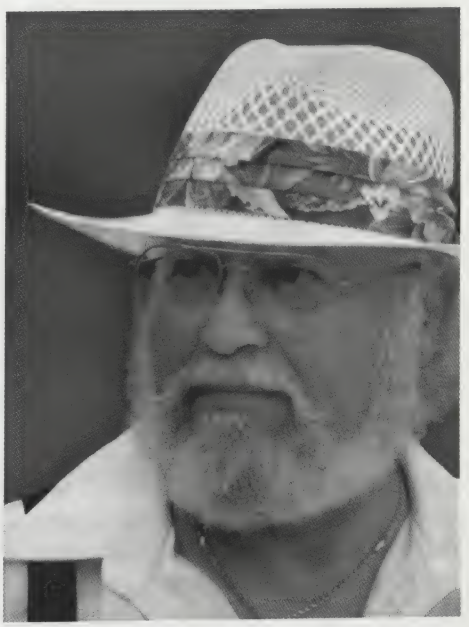
The phone rings, shattering the early morning silence like a boy's stick does icicles. I jump out of bed and run barefoot to the family room, where our only phone hangs on the wall. On the way, I bump into hard things, furniture my wife had rearranged just before we went to bed. When I pick up the receiver, I am not awake yet, but that does not keep me from doing what I have to do. Years of practice have taught me to do things while semiconscious. I have let the cat out, changed diapers, and given babies their formulas without being fully awake. My hands know what to do. The left one picks up the receiver and brings it up to my ear. My half-open eyes read the face of the cat clock on the wall. The cat's eyes are going back and forth like a metronome. It is ten past three, and Desert Shield has just turned into Desert Storm. America and its friends have committed themselves to driving the ruthless Iraqi invaders out of Kuwait. But I am safe in Big Creek Gap, Tennessee. I am home. All's well.

My lips move. They say, "Hello." My free hand scratches my belly.

"*Ken* I *tawk* with Mr. Saddam Hussein, please," an elderly female voice twangs. The thought flashes in my mind that she is a fat old lady with painfully swollen legs in the advanced stages of phlebitis. I am still half-asleep, and I innocently say, "Sorry, Ma'am. I believe you've got the wrong number. There's nobody here by that name." I yawn. I scratch. She cannot see me.

"Oh yes there is," said the voice. It sounded surprisingly polite. Then I heard her nervously trying to place the receiver back on the hook. The dial tone was louder than a fire alarm. This one could have brought me back from the dead, let alone from sleep. Instantly I am fully awake. Fear has always had a sobering effect on me, even when I've had too much to drink. My first thought is, "Oh, Jesus. No. Not again. Please, not again."

I feel weak. My knees turn to rubber under me. There is a loud ringing in my ears. My face feels hot. I have to sit down. When I do, I am back in my sparsely furnished apartment in Chardon,



Mostafa Rahbar

A Lebanese man living in the United States, Anwar Accawi sees the goings-on in the Middle East in a different light.

Ohio. It is the summer of 1972. Eleven athletes on the Israeli Olympic team have just been slaughtered like sheep in Munich, Germany. Arab terrorists had done it, and the world was angry. America was shaken. It was all over the news. This was just too much, and somebody had to be punished. I knew it. That's the way it's always been. *Somebody* would have to pay.

I am Lebanese. That makes me an Arab. I am one of *them.* That *somebody* might very well be me. Never mind the fact that I am basically a coward who gave up hunting birds and small game when I was thirteen because killing them struck me as cruel and obscene. But I am an Arab, and that makes me responsible. And I am *here.* I have reason to fear.

> Fear has always had a sobering effect on me, even when I've had too much to drink. My first thought is, "Oh, Jesus. No. Not again. Please, not again."

The day after those men were shot was hellish for me. I stayed out of sight. I left the apartment and hid in the local theater. I watched one show after another, and some shows twice. I felt safe in the dark, and there was a lot of stuff to eat at the concession stand — soft pretzels smothered in yellow runny cheese, swollen hot dogs with lots of sweet relish, M&Ms, caramel popcorn.

But I had to go out the next day. I could not afford to stay home. I had gone to Chardon to do construction work and make money to defray some of the cost of our trip to the States to see my wife's family. Chardon was a small town, and a stranger could not hope to go unnoticed there. Some knew me or about me, and they were kind, but that was before the Israeli athletes had been killed. For the next three days, I went grocery shopping at Nick's, owned by the dying Italian immigrant, always looking over my shoulder. I went to work with my eyes carefully following every movement around me. But nothing happened! Nobody said anything to me or even gave me a dirty look. I began to think that maybe I was wrong, that there really was nothing to fear.

It was starting to feel safe when the fat man in a beat-up Ford Galaxy came into my life. He showed up at the yard where I cleaned heavy equipment — bulldozer tracks, backhoe buckets, and ditch witches. He drove into the yard right around coffee break and parked across the gravel lot, facing the garage where I worked.

At first, I thought he'd come looking for a job or he was waiting to see somebody he knew on my crew or in the office. I went about my business, but I was very aware of his presence. An hour passed, and he hadn't budged. I started to feel a little uneasy with him sitting there like the Sphinx, watching my every move. But he just sat there, smoked his Camels, puffed angrily, and then flicked the butts of his spent cigarettes like missiles in my direction. He was starting to worry me.

Then worry turned to fear, and I could see him stepping out of his car with a nine-millimeter in his hand and filling me full of tiny holes to avenge those slain men in Munich. In my head, I planned my escape route. There was a culvert behind the shop. I would run into it and come up far away out into the field on the other side of the yard. Then I would run and never stop until I reached my mother-in-law's house in Tennessee.

Of course, it came to me to mention it to Don, my boss and the owner's son. That was the logical thing to do. But I eventually talked myself out of doing that. Don was the most down-to-earth man I had ever met. He was always grease-stained and practical. There was no room anywhere in his head for guesswork, conjectures, or imaginings. If I had been foolish enough to tell him, he would have thrown his head back and laughed at me, especially if the man had turned out to be some guy with nothing better to do with his time than to sit and smoke and stare at people with those baleful eyes of his.

No, I wasn't going to tell Don. It was a bad idea. I was going to wait and see. Meanwhile, I never turned my back on the old Ford. Eventually, the fat man in the plaid shirt left just before quitting time. What a relief it was to hear the roar of his old engine and the crunch of his tires on the gravel receding.

But he was not gone for good. The next morning, he was parked across the street from where I lived. He followed me as I walked to my job a couple of miles away. I walked, and he crept along beside me in his Galaxy, less than a hundred feet away. I looked over my shoulder frequently. I took the side streets, and I speeded up my pace, but I could not shake him. He knew Chardon's back roads well. Finally, I got to the gravel road that led up to the shop, a couple of hundred yards away. As I hurried toward the shop, I looked back at him one more time, and that was when I saw him point his finger at me and twitch his thumb to simulate the falling of the hammer on a gun. I ran. Boy, did I run. I believe that day I set a new record for the two hundred yard dash. But I did not tell anyone, not even the police. I did not know whom to trust. I was just another foreigner, a hired hand among strangers in a strange land.

The same fear I felt in Chardon that summer in 1972 comes back at me full force as I sit in my family room a little after three in the morning as the world and Saddam go to war. The fear is as fresh and strong as if I'd had it only yesterday. That's the way fear is. There is no such thing as stale fear. It is always fresh, and it always smells the way it did the first time it reared its ugly head. I sit, and I wait in the dark. Slowly I begin to

> As I hurried toward the shop, I looked back at him one more time, and that was when I saw him point his finger at me and twitch his thumb to simulate the falling of the hammer on a gun. I ran. Boy, did I run.

Nancy Fischman

Little did Accawi know back during Desert Storm that Saddam Hussein, Yasser Arafat, and Osama bin Laden would still be "doing their thing," not only in the Middle East but throughout the world.

regain my composure. Then I go to bed.

But fear has banished sleep. I lie there and sweat for a while. Then I shiver. "What is tomorrow, today going to bring?" I think — a question I had asked myself many times before when I was living in Lebanon at the onset of the civil war there.

After finishing college here in the States, I got married to Gwen, a Tennessee girl with big blue eyes and round smooth knees, and we went to Sidon, my hometown, to teach. At first, we taught at an American missionary high school there. Later, in 1974, I started teaching at the American University of Beirut. Life was good. The food, the beach, the Roman ruins, and the Mediterranean sun — everything — was wonderful.

And then the Lebanese went berserk and started killing each other over gas and bread and religion. And what they did not do to each other, the Israeli fighter-bombers did to them. Without any warning, they would materialize from thin air and shake the very earth beneath our feet with their air-to-ground missiles, which burned the air and made it stink. When that was over, the local thugs would show up in their screeching jeeps with their M-16s, Kalashnikovs, and rocket-propelled grenades and terrorize us.

My wife, our two kids, and I had to put up with that for months. Then in mid-October 1975, there was a brief lull in the fighting. We did not wait. We packed up our few worldly goods and ran. We fled the country one sunny autumn day a few hours before the airport was bombed and shut down for six months.

We ended up in Big Creek Gap, my wife's hometown. At last we were home, and we felt secure. But here in a small town in East Tennessee, as it turned out, there is no difference made between Lebanese or Libyan, Syrian or Iraqi. We are all Arabs — rag heads, sand niggers, and camel jockeys. To many, I *am* Saddam Hussein. "Wasn't it 'your people' who, back in the eighties, blew up the Marines while they slept in their barracks at the airport in Beirut and killed over two hundred of them?" I was asked. Somebody's got to pay for the evil men do to American boys keeping the peace on the other side of the world.

Rag head and camel jockey I understood. But sand nigger I didn't. My wife explained it to me. She said there were those who considered Arabs like me colored folk. I said, "Jesus, Gwen. I am as white as a sheet. Just look at me."

She said, "Well, it doesn't really matter. You're from *somewheres* over yonder. You're colored, boy. Didn't you know that?"

And then she winked at me and laughed. I laughed too. It was a revelation. I felt kind of special, but in an uneasy sort of way.

But fear will not loosen its hold on my chest this morning. I lie awake and review in my head the many times my wife had to spend hours on the phone after every act of violence in which Arabs were suspected, trying to explain to callers that I was not in any way associated with the people who were doing these things. But that did not keep some from whispering. I overheard what they were saying at the grocery store, on the street, and at the Laundromat (we did not have a washer and dryer when we first came to Big Creek Gap). But when the local weekly paper published an open letter my wife had written to the editor deploring the conditions of classrooms, the callousness of management, and the miserable working conditions of the teachers, the whispers got even louder. One day, a man walked up to my wife and told her to take me back to Pakistan or Korea or wherever she'd found me and leave me there — and that she was welcome to stay there with me if she liked. We were no longer welcome in the county.

This misery was not limited only to my wife and me. It reached out and touched our kids. They suffered, too. My son, Fuad, had to learn to survive despite his name. It could not have been worse for that boy if we had named him Betty or Sue. But he refused to be called Fred or Frank or anything else but Fuad. He set his jaw and took it. My daughter, Gulnar, did not have any trouble with her name. We had been calling her Juli ever since she was born, and nobody knew her real name except some close friends. But when she learned that her father was not *one of us,* she panicked and stopped eating stuffed grape leaves, hummus dip, and falafel. She did not want to eat any of that "weird foreign crap" anymore. She wanted only American food like pizza, tacos, pinto beans, and cornbread.

It is a few minutes before five o'clock. I am beginning to get deliciously sleepy again when something slams against the wall of my son's bedroom, which faces the road. Then a car speeds away, its tires screaming like a horse that has been gut-shot. I put on my sweats and run with my Mag-lite flashlight in my hand. It is nothing. It is not a bullet or a Molotov bomb — only a beer bottle. I have reason to thank God for His many mercies. I go back inside — and wait.

> There is no such thing as stale fear. It is always fresh, and it always smells the way it did the first time it reared its ugly head.

I would continue to wait for many more years, but no crosses were burned on my lawn and no swastikas were drawn on my walls. Finally we moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, but my

wife is still teaching at the same high school. Her situation has improved, though. Her principal, the one who wanted her out of *his* school, is long gone now. Juli eventually rediscovered Middle Eastern food, and she eats kibbi, tabbouli, and baba ghanouj every chance she gets.

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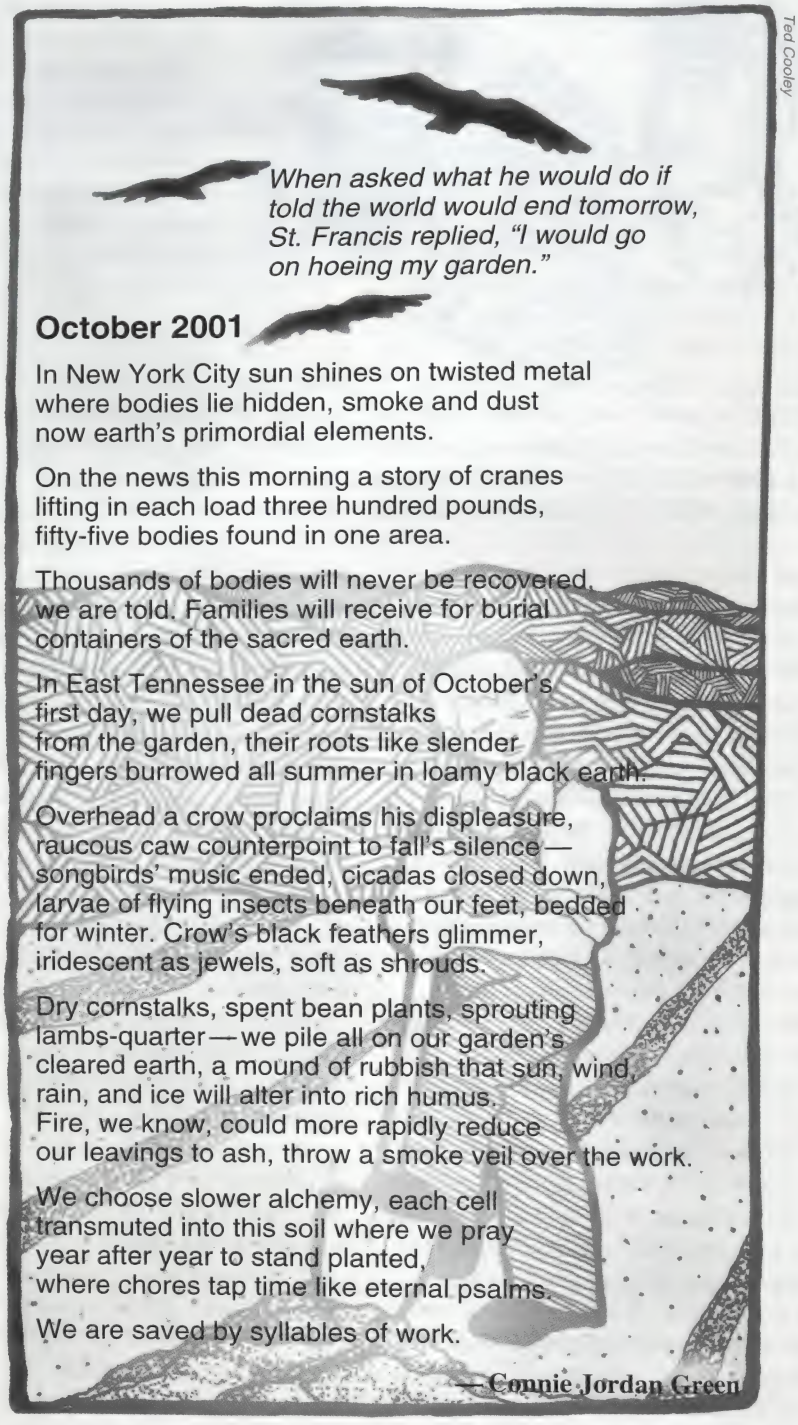
Fuad has weathered his name, and now he wears it like a badge of honor.

But I am still scared. Saddam Hussein is still in power in Iraq. And his ilk—Osama bin Laden, Yasser Arafat, and many others—are still doing their thing in the Middle East.

And I am *here,* wondering what it is going to cost me the next time these men or their followers blow up something or kill someone we love. But I should like to think I am better prepared now. I've got a new pair of Nike running shoes under my bed and a handy Mag-lite flashlight I always keep full of fresh copper-top alkaline batteries on the nightstand right by my bed. And at fifty-nine, I still can overtake *any* bunny rabbit on the run. N&T

Anwar F. Accawi considers himself an accidental writer. A story he wrote for his children about his life was accepted by The Sun *magazine after a friend suggested he submit it. Houghton Mifflin later published it in its annual* Best American Essays. *In 1999, Beacon Press published his book,* The Boy From the Tower of the Moon. *Accawi reports that since September 11th, he has received nothing but support from his Knoxville, Tenn., neighbors, where he now teaches in the University of Tennessee's English Language Institute.*


Ted Cooley
When asked what he would do if told the world would end tomorrow, St. Francis replied, "I would go on hoeing my garden."
October 2001
In New York City sun shines on twisted metal
where bodies lie hidden, smoke and dust
now earth's primordial elements.
On the news this morning a story of cranes
lifting in each load three hundred pounds,
fifty-five bodies found in one area.
Thousands of bodies will never be recovered,
we are told. Families will receive for burial
containers of the sacred earth.
In East Tennessee in the sun of October's
first day, we pull dead cornstalks
from the garden, their roots like slender
fingers burrowed all summer in loamy black earth.
Overhead a crow proclaims his displeasure,
raucous caw counterpoint to fall's silence—
songbirds' music ended, cicadas closed down,
larvae of flying insects beneath our feet, bedded
for winter. Crow's black feathers glimmer,
iridescent as jewels, soft as shrouds.
Dry cornstalks, spent bean plants, sprouting
lambs-quarter—we pile all on our garden's
cleared earth, a mound of rubbish that sun, wind,
rain, and ice will alter into rich humus.
Fire, we know, could more rapidly reduce
our leavings to ash, throw a smoke veil over the work.
We choose slower alchemy, each cell
transmuted into this soil where we pray
year after year to stand planted,
where chores tap time like eternal psalms.
We are saved by syllables of work.
—Connie Jordan Green

Connie Jordan Green has had poetry published in Confrontation, Cotton Boll, Cumberland Poetry Review, Iowa Woman, Now & Then, Poem, *and others, as well as in several anthologies. Her short fiction has been in* Appalachian Heritage *and the children's magazine* Cricket. *Green has written two books for young people,* The War at Home *and* Emmy, *and writes a weekly newspaper column.*

In Search of the Fugate Family of Lost Creek, Kentucky

by Robert Liftig

A young man from Connecticut asks a simple question about his Kentucky bride's family history. Getting a simple answer takes decades.

I am newly married to the former Inez Fugate of Ganderbill Branch, Watts Post Office, Lost Creek, Ky. We met in the Peace Corps two years before, when we were somewhere between the United States and an assignment for teaching positions in West Africa. Inez by now knows my family like an open book, but this is the first time I have met hers.

It has taken us three days to drive here from Connecticut. In some places, there are road washouts; in others, the pavement gives way to dirt. We finally get up Ganderbill Holler near midnight on the first of July 1971, and I spend the next three days in what the Peace Corps calls a "cross-cultural experience."

My wife's Kentucky mountain family is wonderful to me. One night, however, my new mother-in-law picks up on the fact that I feel a little queasy about the first impression I've created. She asks me if I am feeling homesick, and I say I am worried about whether the family likes me or not. My mother-in-law looks at me carefully, then says, "Why, we don't have any choice. You're kin."

Foggy Origins

In the Northeastern sense, members of the Fugate family don't seem to care who exactly their kin are. No one asks me where I went to college, what my major was, what I want to "be," or how I plan on supporting their daughter. No one wants to know what my father does for a living or what religion I follow or even my politics. They do want to know about "me," however — what kind of person I am, completely aside from any of these Northeastern markers. This is a first for me — and something of a challenge.

After the July Fourth Independence Day Celebration at the Riverside Christian School (nail driving contests, a flea market, a pig roast), it is time for us to return to Connecticut for graduate study. Things have gone well, but the Northeasterner in me still wants to know who my new kin are — in my own cultural terms. So on the porch late in the evening, I ask the family historian — Rob Fugate, the first fully grown man I have ever met who wears bib overalls — what country the Fugates were from.

"Well, thar was Old Man Henley," Rob begins. "He was from Perry County."

Courtesy of Inez and Robert Liftig

Granville Fugate, "Old Man Gran," stands in front of the "New House" (with white siding, back right) with his nephew, family historian Rob Fugate (in bib overalls) in this photo taken about 1940. When he was 12, Gran saw his father, Bill Fugate, killed by a Union sniper. Gran lived to be 104.

Courtesy of Inez and Robert Liftig

The first Fugates on Lost Creek lived under "rock houses" (cliff outcroppings). Old Man Gran (Inez's grandfather) was part of the first generation to be raised in Ganderbill Holler. Gran's brother Alex lived in this one-room cabin, built around 1850.

No, I say, I don't mean what county … what *country* are they from?

Old Rob considers awhile and then says, "Well, the first Fugate came into this country from … from … let's see … way back now … from over in Virginny."

While I find the Fugates of Lost Creek fascinating for their seemingly forever participation in American history, the Fugates, it seems, could hardly care less. From a genealogical point of view, the Fugate family is the opposite of my family. The Fugates possess a name that is common all over the South. In contrast, there are just about 20 Liftigs (a name invented at Ellis Island) in the entire country. The Fugates have been in the U.S. for so long, they don't even care to trace their origins. The Liftigs came from Europe 100 years ago, and we still know the names of the squalid and hopeless villages from which they emigrated. My mother-in-law claims her husband Ed told her the Fugates are "Scotch," and I can still hear the heavy rolled Rs in their speech patterns. My grandfather rolled his Rs too — in his Russian accent.

Getting Nowhere Fast

Where were the Fugates from? I am not a professional genealogist, so I did what most amateur genealogists do: I obsessed on the question for 15 years, gathering lots of information but getting nowhere.

The *gate* at the end of *Fugate* seemed English to me — though the name was almost always pronounced "Few´get." However, a casual visit to the Bodeleian Library's Genealogical Collection at Oxford University in England turned up nothing. Curiously, a trip to the Connecticut State Library revealed that a "John and Sarah Ffuggate" (old English spelling) had actually settled with their three children in New Haven Colony, Conn., in 1639 but then inconveniently dropped off the face of the planet. They may in fact lie buried under the New Haven green with 1,200 other victims of an epidemic. Our older daughter, Anya, graduated from Yale three years ago, and her dorm room overlooked the former graveyard.

The Kentucky State Library records were full of Fugates who had received Revolutionary War land grants to settle in Kentucky, but the families had been huge back then — sometimes there were 20 siblings per family for several generations in a row — and they all seemed to be named Ben or Martin or Bill. Some of the Fugates in Breathitt County said they were related to the Cherokee Indians. Others claimed descent from Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony of Roanoke of 1587, while still others described a relationship to early settlers called Melungeons who lived along the border with Tennessee. Some believe that these triracial Melungeons were themselves in part descendants of shipwrecked Portuguese captured by Sir Francis Drake and liberated along the coast of the Carolinas; perhaps, then, it is not just a coincidence that *fugate* is a Spanish command meaning "to run away."

A friend of mine with Virginia roots thought the Fugates might be descended from Governor Fauquier for whom Virginia's Fauquier County is named or from the Fuqua family, all of whom are believed to have descended from a French Huguenot who emigrated to this country in the mid-17th century. Even the distinguished attorney and University of Kentucky professor Harry Caudill, author of *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* weighed in with his own theory when I came to know him a few years later. He stated with authority that *fugate* was a Latin word meaning fugitive and had been the designation for homeless people in the English Domesday Book, compiled after the arrival of William the Conqueror in 1066.

We traveled a lot in those days, so I made it a practice to search motel phone books, almost always turning up a Fugate. I called all of them. An African American Fugate in Boston laughed genially, told me he had assumed the name during his travels around the world after World War II, and that it was Italian. A literary agent in New York said he was from the Midwest and was a descendant of a French solider, a nobleman no less, who had been posted to St. Louis in the 1700s. A neighbor in Connecticut, whose last name was Fugitt, wanted to set me straight right away: He was from Buffalo,

I am not a professional genealogist, so I did what most amateur genealogists do: I obsessed on the question for 15 years, gathering lots of information but getting nowhere.

N.Y., and he would never claim any Southern relatives — ever.

Blue Fugates

Then a relative of mine in California sent me a scientific article about the Blue Fugates of Kentucky right after our first child was born. The piece detailed a genetic abnormality in Fugate hemoglobin that made children appear blue. My relative thought we should tell the doctors to check out our daughter for signs of this unfortunate heritage. My wife and I were horrified.

One winter, I wheedled my way into a party in New York City and introduced myself to former New York City Ballet principal ballerina Judith Fugate, who told me she was from New Jersey but that her father was from Hamilton, Ohio. She only knew he was Scotch-Irish and dead, thankfully, and didn't want to talk about him. Someone else wryly suggested I contact a Caril Ann Fugate of Texas. She had just been released from a federal prison after 40 years and was listed in the *Encyclopedia of Serial Killers* for her infamous murder rampage in the 1950s with boyfriend and soon-to-be-executed accomplice, Charley Starkweather.

I visited the Mormon library in New Canaan, Conn., and searched through its famous genealogical offerings. Church members are encouraged to research their lineage and to offer their ancestors the chance to be baptized into the faith retroactively. Because of this, the Mormons can do almost anything, genealogically speaking, by calling on their database, the world's greatest culling of family records. Those records are forever stored, climate-controlled, somewhere in Utah. The Mormons located Fugates for me — or Fouquets, the closest name to it — in Normandy, France, buckets of them, but unfortunately that didn't prove a thing. In genealogy, you have to trace your ancestry backwards in order to be certain that the line of the descent really does end up at your front door. In the case of the Fugates, there were too many Perry counties changing boundaries in various parts of the U.S., too many Bills and Henleys, too many ways to spell *Fugate* (Fugitt, Fowcate, Feckett), and too many years in this country to work this puzzle out.

After 15 years of searching, I was frustrated and ready to consider my wife's family as one of life's greater mysteries. Still, I wanted to know: Who were the Fugates of Lost Creek, Ky.?

Breakthrough

One day, the answer arrived in my mother-in-law's mail. She had received a question sheet from the author of a proposed genealogy of the family Fugate, a David Faris, who wanted her to update her side of the million-sided clan and mail it back to his home in Philadelphia. She said she didn't really care — the by-now-typical Fugate response to genealogical endeavors — and sent it along to me. I contacted Faris. He had already completed three of four genealogy books about the roots of his grandparents but was saving the toughest for last: the Fugates.

"It's a huge Southern clan," he said over the phone to me, "but they aren't sending back the questionnaires. They really don't seem to care." He was already fed up with the project.

Faris did say he had gotten much of his early information from a Mary Fugate, the editor of the *Fugate Family Newsletter* out of Pittsburgh and that he was sure she could help me.

A *Fugate Family Newsletter?* An expert on the Fugates? Finally, a Fugate who cared?

I contacted Mary, and we realized immediately that we had something in common. She wasn't really a Fugate either. That was her husband's side — and, of course, he didn't really care. She was the one who had gotten interested in Faris' project, and if I could provide her with my wife's immediate ancestors, she could provide me with a pretty accurate line right back to the early 1600s.

The Fugate Family Tree

Peter La Foucate (b. 1650s, France) m. Frances Mould
James Fugate (b. 1680s, Baltimore Co., Md.) m. Martha Poel
Josias Fugate (b. 1700, King Georges Co., Va.) m. Mary Martin
John Fugate (b. circa 1730, Va.) m. Sarah Henley
Benjamin Fugate (b. 1755, Frederick County, Va.) m. Hannah Devers
Henley Fugate (b. 1798, Russell County, Va.) m. Tabitha McIntosh
William Fugate (b. 1825, Perry County, Ky.) m. Rachel Neace
Granville Fugate (b. 1850, Breathitt County, Ky.) m. Julia Collingsworth
Edward James Fugate (b. 1912, Breathitt County, Ky.) m. Vesta Noble
Inez Fugate (b. 1948, Breathitt County, Ky.) m. Robert Liftig

We traveled a lot in those days, so I made it a practice to search motel phone books, almost always turning up a Fugate. I called all of them.

Courtesy of Inez and Robert Liftig

Granville Pearl Fugate was 64, and his wife, Julia Collingsworth Fugate, was 24 when this 1914 photo was taken. Inez Fugate's future father, Edward James, sits on his own father's lap, with his brother Clarence on his mother's. Three more children were born later.

So the information I sent to Dave Faris became part of the *Fugates of Russell County Virginia,* a privately printed book that still, for the most part, lies warehoused in Philadelphia. With the information Mary provided me, I could now, at long last, construct a Fugate genealogy. With this genealogy, and some visits to various state libraries, the history of my wife's branch of the family became a veritable textbook in American history.

We could now trace the Fugate family line to Peter the Immigrant, who had come to Maryland in 1662, settled what he called the "French Plantation" near Baltimore, and acquired English citizenship in 1681. His mother was most probably "Em of Ould England," and his father may have been James LaFoucate, a member of the Mariner's Huguenot Church in Spittlefield, England (now part of London), often listed as "Fouquette, LaFouqate, Le Fugette," and on and on. Family tradition had them escaping from France to Holland after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 when King Charles IX of France — on the advice of his mother, Catherine de Médicis — ordered the murder of thousands of French Huguenot leaders. The Fugates then went from Holland to England as part of the pre-Pilgrim ingathering of Protestants.

Within a generation of their arrival in Maryland, James — Peter's son — had apparently dodged a tax bill he couldn't pay by escaping to Virginia. His son, Josias, was listed as a deserter from "His Majesties Service" in central Virginia, and Josias' son, John, followed the Great Wagon Road down the Valley of Virginia (present-day Route 11, which roughly parallels Interstate 81), and settled in Castlewood, Va., near the frontier town of Abingdon, where he spawned many children along the Clinch River. At least one of these, Benjamin, was awarded a land grant in the newly minted State of Kentucky, formerly part of Virginia, for his Revolutionary War service. Ben begat Henley, who brought into the world Old Bill, shot by a Yankee sniper behind the house where my wife was born.

One day, the answer arrived in my mother-in-law's mail.

But before he died, Old Bill fathered Granville, my wife's grandfather, otherwise known as "The Old Man." He lived to be 104. Granville was father to Edward James Fugate, who was the father of my wife Inez, who joined the Peace Corps and met me and changed both my life and our families' lines forever, even if together we did not change the world.

So the Fugates of Lost Creek, Ky., were not the products of the "typical" Appalachian bloodline: Scotch or English or Pennsylvania German or Cherokee or the mysterious Melungeons.

Now I know the answer to that simple question I posed more than 30 years ago: The Fugates came from France. N&T

Robert Liftig is a high school teacher in Westchester County, N.Y., and has been an adjunct assistant professor of English at Fairfield University in Connecticut for the last 20 years. He is married to the former Inez Fugate of Lost Creek, Ky., and lives in Westport, Conn. Daughter Anya and wife, Inez, have also contributed to Now & Then's *summer 2000 and spring 2001 issues.*

Lessons for the Genealogist

1. Always trace your ancestry backwards, no matter how difficult the task might seem. To start at some convenient imaginary ancestor and then move forward makes it almost certain your family tree will be incorrect.

2. Make use of many resources: family histories, birth certificates, family genealogical associations, records available from the Mormons, and Internet services available through Genealogy.com or Ancestry.com.

3. Remember that you are, by definition, tracing a mere sliver of your progenitors. All of us, for example, have 8192 ancestors in the 13th generation, though some of these people are probably crossovers from one line to another and are therefore duplicates. Still, if you have traced back several hundred years to one ancestor, you are tapping into only 1/8192nd of your line.

4. Honor family traditions. Though often wrong, there is an essence of truth contained in many of them. For example, later research showed it was my wife's grandmother — a Fugate by marriage whose maiden name was originally Collingsworth — who was indeed a descendant from Melungeons. There were Cherokee on many sides, though not directly in the Fugate line. There also were noblemen named Fouquet, just as the literary agent claimed, though my wife is not related to them. My wife did descend from Scotch-Irish, English, Pennsylvania Dutch, and Irish as well, though none of those ancestors were Fugates.

5. Follow the linguistics of a name as well as its spelling. Uniform spelling was introduced only in the 1800s. Pronunciation is often a more consistent indicator of original intentions. The "Fugitts" of Lost Creek saw the spelling of their name mutate to the more English-sounding "Fugate," though the pronunciation probably remained the same as it had been in France. (Curiously, my own rare "Liftig" surname is a linguistic flashback to a bad pronunciation of "Luftig" by certain family members on the poor side of the Great Lake in the Ukraine.) For the record, "Fouquet" is ninth-century French and meant "squirrel of the woods."

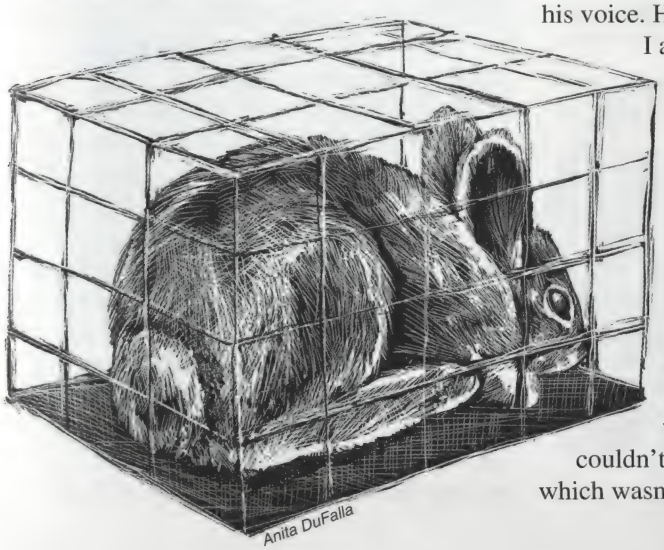
6. Give up any thought of finding the pure American ancestor of impeccable breeding. Most Southern Americans are not descended from the scions of Virginia Cavaliers with their very own noble family crest to advertise their pedigrees. Nor were they descended from Pocahontas or Sir Walter Scott or the Irish King Brian Boru. Genealogically, much like their countrymen in the Northeastern United States, the Fugates can now be seen as a "typical" American family — melting pot mutts — and the products of generations of curious intermingling.

— RL

Anthracite

by Angelynn King

"Here's the city slicker," Pappy growls. I can't remember ever touching him while my grandmother was alive, but now I walk across the pitted linoleum to kiss his cheek. There is no dough rising or turkey being trussed, no sign of food at all, except a loose pile of red peppers from the garden, spilling lazily across the countertop like unracked billiard balls.



Anita DuFalla

With Baba gone, there is little difference between the kitchen and the mine office, right down to the smell of strong coffee and sweat and space heaters. I'm not sure he recalls which one he's in until he steps through the door to find himself facing either a mountain of slag or a mountain of graduation photos.

I walk through to the living room and place the cage on the coffee table. "What the hell is that?" He doesn't need to raise his voice. He is nearly always shouting.

I am compelled to answer this clearly rhetorical question. "It's a rabbit." My small charge gazes at me blankly, neither interested nor afraid.

"What the hell we gonna do with a rabbit?"

"Sophie's coming to pick it up."

When I called my cousin about fostering the rabbit, I told her he had been a gift, which was true, and that I couldn't have a pet in the apartment, which wasn't precisely true. The truth was that I had tried and tried — and finally failed — to drum up some affection for him. But I never knew what he wanted, and this drove me to distraction.

"That's all we need. A goddamn rabbit. Got enough animals around here. Too many goddamn…" The rest is drowned out as he cranks up the volume on the Pirates.

In the evening, I go out onto the porch to smoke, as I have done since adolescence. The air is dense with chlorophyll and crickets. Two of my two dozen first cousins are just my age. On this kind of night, we used to lie on our backs on the

"Here." He holds out his hand in the gesture of a boon-bestowing Buddha. I cup my free hand underneath to receive. "Hard coal," he says, as the weight drops into my palm. "Anthracite."

hillside, tossing pebbles up into the air, tempting the bats to swoop lower and lower until we lost ourselves in screaming. The innings had floated out the open windows of the living room into a sky that grew first bluer and then blacker, as we waited for the fireflies to come out and turn the evergreens into the Christmas trees of summer.

The truth was that I had tried and tried—and finally failed—to drum up some affection for him. But I never knew what he wanted, and this drove me to distraction.

My grandfather releases the storm door just as I am striking a match on one of the stone pillars of the porch. His glance flickers over me and away. The family doesn't take an interest in the smoking habits of its youthful members. One of my younger cousins lives in a trailer park with two toddlers and no health insurance; another is a Pennsylvania state prison guard. Chances are it won't be smoking that gets them.

He lowers himself heavily into a creaking chair. I marvel at how those giant genes seem to have evaporated. His children and grandchildren are, without exception, of average height or even smaller. Although a few are heavy, none of us are particularly muscular, though we all have that bruised-under-the-eyes look of Ellis Island refugees.

"Here." He holds out his hand in the gesture of a boon-bestowing Buddha. I cup my free hand underneath to receive. "Hard coal," he says, as the weight drops into my palm. "Anthracite."

Its jagged edges are very black and cold to the touch. I have seen it carved into tacky figurines at turnpike exit gift shops, but I have never seen it in its natural state. It comes from a part of the state that he would consider far away, although he of course came from much farther. "It's beautiful," I say, both because I know it is what he expects me to say and because it is true.

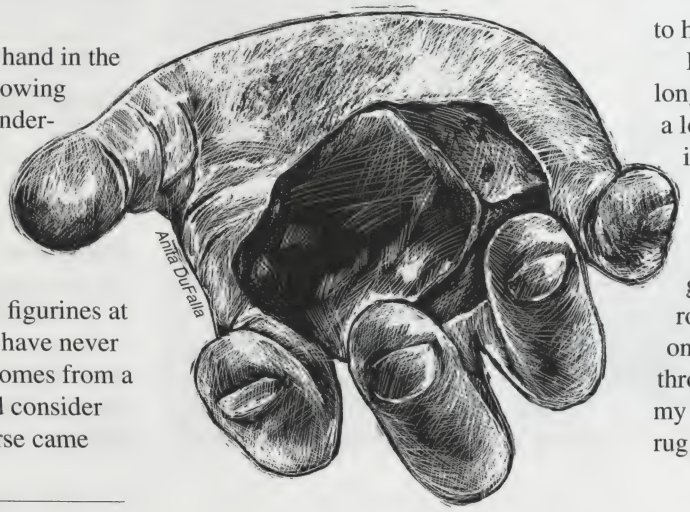
The facets glitter in the low light like the expressionless eyes of small prey. I turn it over, running my fingers over all the sharp edges before I hand it back.

"It doesn't come off on your hands," he says, almost to himself. I wonder if that means it doesn't come off on your lungs, either.

When I tried to think up a home for the rabbit, Sophie's was the first name that came to mind. She and I were both named for my grandmother. Although from three discontinuous generations, we always had that superficial bond, making us into a little triumvirate of likeness in an unruly clan. Since she was small, Sophie had displayed a fondness for animals that was considered almost freakish in this hunting culture. She lives on a farm now, although her husband still goes down the mine to pay the mortgage.

Sophie was born in '76, and for years Baba and I dutifully saved up all of our bicentennial quarters for her. There was never a thought of what she might do with them, just a tacit agreement between her benefactors that piles of coins were a blessing. I wonder sometimes if my grandmother had ever even seen a pile of coins in the Old Country—or if they might perhaps still accomplish most of their commerce by barter, even now.

Once we all saved up to send her back to her village, but she declined. One trip across the drink was enough, she said. She used the money to buy a full eight place settings of china for each of the granddaughters who married that year. Mine is Wedgwood and is allowed out only at Christmas. I was the family's youngest bride that year—and the most expensive.



For breakfast, he fries red peppers and eggs. There is even homemade bread in the freezer; one of the aunts must have brought it over.

I pretend I did not notice through the crack in the door at midnight my grandfather kneeling on the hooked rug and speaking in susurrant Slovenian to the rabbit, coaxing him slowly toward the door of the cage with the oyster crackers scattered in his huge palm.

"Where's James?" he demands suddenly.

"He has to teach."

"He never comes up."

"Grandpap, you didn't speak to him once the whole last time we were up here."

"We watched the game."

By this he means he stomped into the room once and bellowed, "What's the score?" James was so startled he spilled his drink. My grandmother materialized in the wake of the squall with a wet cloth, cackling softly. Afterward, James asked me if he might have dreamt it.

"He sent you some tea. It's supposed to help with your digestion."

He glances at the box, then squints long and hard into the empty hall, seeing a long line of sons-in-law and grandsons-in-law. "Yep," he says finally. "Them Johnny Bulls like their cuppa tea."

I close my eyes and breathe in the yeasty smell of the bread. I pretend my grandmother has just stepped out of the room. I pretend the earth is still spinning on its axis. I pretend I did not notice through the crack in the door at midnight my grandfather kneeling on the hooked rug and speaking in susurrant Slovenian to

the rabbit, coaxing him slowly toward the door of the cage with the oyster crackers scattered in his huge palm.

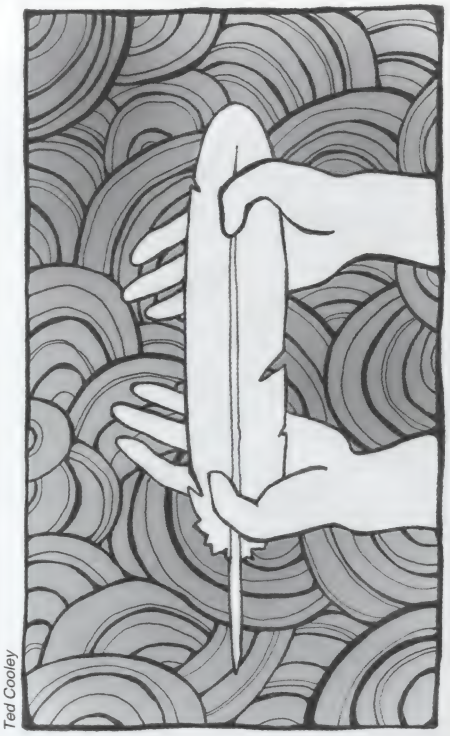
Repacking my overnight bag, I pull out the arts section of the newspaper I brought with me, the generic Anglicism of my married name in bold print beneath the headline. Crackling the pages in my hands, I remember the way the old man held the hard coal, his respect for the imperviousness and concreteness of the products of the earth, even his profane tenderness for its more fragile creatures. I cannot picture him standing in an art gallery, much less reading about someone else standing in an art gallery, and I do not know upon whom to place the blame for this failure of the imagination.

My mother, his eldest daughter, had driven me to my first big assignment in her Mercedes. She made a party of it, taking me out for dinner afterward. He calls her "the aristocrat." On her rare visits, she brings him Italian wine knit up in baskets and rustic handmade sweaters in improbably European sizes like "Super Extra Grande." She is the hard one, the one with facets who leaves nothing behind.

I remember the way the old man held the hard coal, his respect for the imperviousness and concreteness of the products of the earth, even his profane tenderness for its more fragile creatures.

I refold the newspaper and slide it back into the suitcase, pressing the edges down so the zipper makes a perfect seam. I wipe my palms on my jeans and hoist the suitcase in one hand. Then I reach out for the doorknob, veins of black ink still clinging stubbornly to the corners of my fingers. N&T

Although Angelynn King currently lives and works in Southern California as a librarian at the University of Redlands, her roots are in Pennsylvania and Western New York. She is a second-generation American descended from Welsh and Slovenian coal miners. This is the first piece of fiction she has ever submitted for publication.



Ted Cooley

Pilgrim of Gray Mist

No histories say how old the wanderlust heart is,
but my mother had it, as did hers upon countless before—

like they who lived as wood grubs, silent among the cedars,
I am here, my mind like still water reflecting the scarab moon,

its yellow the deep of slacktide upon rocky black shoals to the east.
Leaves have begun to spill from trees already, the wild autumn

geese are wedging southwards; they too fly low with a heavy burden,
a desire to be "there," not here—wherever "there" might be.

If I were Li Po, I would write of tears, how they might founder
my soul, drown the prairies with the salt of a thousand oceans,

but instead my spirits soar and I think of loons, blue-masked birds
wading shallow in the lichen-green pond before me, its toad-blurp waters.

The winds blow and blow, but on my hermitage, this self-imposed exile,
I find ashes of a past fire, stir them with a branch until they kindle bright,

alive again with the heat of fire, the moon, the silver tongs of stars.

—Ryan G. Van Cleave

As a child, Ryan Van Cleave spent many summers in northern Mississippi, where his parents were raised. He is the Anastasia C. Hoffman Poetry Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Creative Writing. Van Cleave's work has appeared in Arts & Letters, Quarterly West, *and* Ploughshares. *Two books,* Say Hello *(Pecan Grove Press) and the anthology* American Diaspora: Poetry of Displacement *(University of Iowa Press), came out in 2001. His poetry textbook from Allyn & Bacon/Longman is due out this year.*

Raised to *Leave*

by Lee Smith

Novelist Lee Smith remembers the old days when for Appalachians "getting culture" meant leaving home.

I was born in a rugged ring of mountains in Southwest Virginia — mountains so high, so straight up and down that the sun didn't even hit our yard until about eleven o'clock.

My uncle Bob — they lived across the road — used to predict the weather by sticking his head out the window and hollering back inside, "Sun on the mountaintop, girls!" to my cousins. The only flat land in the county lay in a narrow band along the river. Though we all "ate out of the garden," real farming was impossible in this "hard rock ground." The only thing it produced was coal.

We never thought of our jagged mountains as scenic either, though we all played up in them every day after school, making forts and clubhouses and swinging on grapevines until they rang the bell to call us home for supper. We never saw a tourist, and nobody we knew hiked for fun.

I will never forget the first time I ever saw a jogger: My mother and I were sitting on the front porch stringing beans and watching the cars go up and down Route 460 in front of our house when suddenly one of these VISTAs we'd been hearing about, a long-haired boy with great legs, came running right up the road. We both stood up and watched him until he was out of sight. "Well, for heaven's sakes," my mother said. "Where do you reckon he's going, running like that?"

He was going back to where he came from eventually, but most of us weren't going anyplace. We were closed in entirely, cut off from the outside world by our ring of mountains. Many of the children I went to school with had never been out of Buchanan County. My own mother was referred to as a "foreigner" at her funeral, though it had been over fifty years since she had first come there to teach home economics and married my daddy. She'd spent those years trying to civilize him and his whole unruly clan, but it was a challenge.

So I was being raised to leave.

Courtesy of Lee Smith

Lee Smith was eight or nine when she sat for this photo in the early 1950s. She and her family, including her "foreigner" mother, were fans of local boy Ralph Stanley when he was playing the drive-in movie circuit.

I was not to use double negatives. I was not to say "me and Martha." I was not to trade my pimento cheese sandwiches at school for the lunch I really wanted: cornbread and buttermilk

This hillbilly music didn't have anything to do with "culture," as I was constantly being reminded. No, "culture" was someplace else, and when the time came, I would be sent off to get some.

in a Mason jar, brought by the kids from the hollers. Me and Martha were not to play in the black river behind our house, dirty with the coal they were washing upstream.

I was to take piano lessons from the terrifying Mrs. Ruth Boyd, even though I had no aptitude for it. I was to play "Claire de Lune" at my piano recital, wearing an itchy pink net evening dress. I was not to like the mountain music that surrounded us on every side, from the men playing banjo and mandolin on the sidewalk outside my daddy's dime store on Saturdays to Martha's father playing his guitar down on the riverbank after dinner to Johnny Cash singing "Ring of Fire" on our brand new radio station, WNRG.

But here, my mother ran into serious trouble for I loved this

Courtesy of the Birthplace of Country Music Alliance (BCMA) Museum

During the 1940s and 1950s, Ralph and Carter Stanley sang on the WCYB Farm and Fun Time radio show on WCYB, Bristol, Va., as well as at local venues such as drive-in theaters in Southwest Virginia.

music. I had been born again to "Angel Band," sung high and sweet at a tent revival that I snuck out to go to, and I had a dobro-playing boyfriend — with Nashville aspirations.

Even my mother enjoyed going to the drive-in theater on Saturday evenings in the summer to hear Ralph and Carter Stanley, two brothers from over in Dickenson County, play and sing their bluegrass music on top of the square concrete-block concession stand. "I never will marry, I'll take me no wife; I intend to live single, all of my life," Ralph wailed mournfully, followed by their fast instrumental version of "Shout, Little Lulie." Old people were clogging on the patch of concrete in front of the window where you bought your Cokes and popcorn; little kids were swinging on the iron-pipe swing set. Whole families ate the

It seems to me that Dr. Ralph's Carnegie Hall appearance symbolizes something that is happening to Appalachian culture as a whole.

fried chicken and deviled eggs they'd brought from home, sitting on quilts on the grass. My boyfriend reached over and squeezed my sweaty hand. The Stanley Brothers' nasal voices rose higher than the gathering mist, higher than the lightning bugs that rose from the trees along the river as night came on. When it got full dark, the Stanley Brothers climbed down off the concession stand, and we all got into our cars and the movie came on.

I loved that music, just as I loved my grandmother's corn pudding and those scary old stories my Uncle Vern told. But this hillbilly music didn't have anything to do with "culture," as I was constantly being reminded. No, "culture" was someplace else, and when the time came, I would be sent off to get some. Culture lived in big cities like Richmond and Washington and Paris and Boston and London and New York — especially in New York, especially in places like Carnegie Hall.

Carnegie Hall ... where on June 9th of 2001, I stood on my $100 balcony seat and screamed as 74-year-old Dr. Ralph Stanley and the rest of the traditional musicians and singers on the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack played to a sold-out house. That CD has been phenomenally successful both in this country and abroad.

Elvis Costello was the emcee. Joel and Ethan Coen, the filmmakers who made the *O Brother* movie, were in the audience, along with T-Bone Burnett, its musical director. The Coen brothers had written a note aimed at this New York audience about the music in the program: "These songs were for the most part created by people whose lives were hard and horizons narrow. Their lives were not like ours. All that urges their music on us is its humanity. ... And yet, this soundtrack went platinum without receiving any airplay: pop stations considered it too country, and country stations considered it too ... country."

On stage at Carnegie Hall, the Fairfield Four sang their stark treatment of "Po' Lazarus." Dan Tyminski, the voice of George

Clooney in the film, tore it up on "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow." The Cox family, fresh from Louisiana with Daddy still in a wheelchair following an accident, brought down the house with "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?" Reigning bluegrass princess Alison Krauss fiddled up a storm, then sang "When I Go Down to the River to Pray" in tight harmony with Gillian Welch and Emmylou Harris. They sang so sweet, they could have been angels. They made us all cry with the beautiful "Who Will Sing for Me?" which they had just performed at John Hartford's funeral.

The little Peasall sisters — Sarah, age 13, Hannah, age 10, and Leah, age 8 — wore patent leather shoes and bows in their hair to sing "In the Highways and the Hedges, I'll Be Somewhere Listening for My Name." Welch's husband, David Rawlings, teamed up with her on a knockout version of "I Want to Sing That Rock and Roll." Other songs were sung by performers in other combinations, usually accompanied by the peerless Jerry Douglas on dobro.

> We will talk your ears off. We still excel at storytelling – and I mean everybody, not just some old guy in overalls at a folk festival.

But the night belonged to Ralph Stanley, who came out last, all by himself, and took center stage to give his famous a cappella rendition of the terrifying "O Death," with all lights black except for a single spotlight trained directly on him. "O Death, O Death, won't you spare me over for another year?" His high, haunting voice filled the huge dark hall. The song lasted for five minutes, followed by almost a full moment of total silence. Then pandemonium broke loose. The stage lights went up, the house lights went on, all the other performers rushed out on stage, and the standing ovation went on and on.

Mercury Records

Smith was in attendance when Ralph Stanley appeared at Carnegie Hall as part of the Down From the Mountain tour, a result of the huge worldwide popularity for bluegrass music engendered by the release of the Grammy-winning soundtrack from the movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

Although he loves to poke fun at his own success — recently referring to the movie as "O Brother, Where Art Thou *At?*" — Dr. Ralph Stanley has come a long way from the top of the concession stand at the Grundy Drive-In Theater. A six-time Grammy nominee and a Grand Ole Opry member, Stanley picked up his honorary doctorate in music from Lincoln University in Harrogate, Tenn.. He was the first recipient of the National Endowment for the Humanities' Traditional American Music Award, and he performed at the inaugurations of both Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. On April 24, 2001, he was awarded the Library of Congress Living Legend Medal; his fellow inductees included baseball great Hank Aaron, Secretary of State Colin Powell, folk musician Pete Seeger, and violinist Isaac Stern.

It seems to me that Dr. Ralph's Carnegie Hall appearance symbolizes something that is happening to Appalachian culture as a whole. Now, everybody in the region realizes that we don't have to go anyplace else to "get culture." Every little town has its own festival, celebrating itself with local music, food, and crafts — whether it's called a "blackberry festival" or a "ramp festival" or a "wooly worm contest" or "gingerbread day" or a "fiddling convention." Fueled by a nationally, politically correct appreciation of whatever is still ethnically or geographically or culturally distinct, America as a whole is coming to appreciate and value its differences. Everybody understands that our own Appalachian culture is as rich and as diverse in terms of history, arts, crafts, literature, folklore, and music, for instance, as any other area in this country.

> Look at Dolly Parton, now a national icon. "I had to get rich to sing this poor," she has said, referring to the success of her last two albums.

In fact, we are richer than most. Our formidable geography acted as a natural barrier for so long, I think — keeping others out, holding us in, allowing for the development of our rich folk culture, our distinctive speech patterns, our strong sense of tradition, and our radical individualism. Appalachian people are more rooted than other Southerners. We still live in big extended families that spoil children and revere old people. We will talk your ears off. We still excel at storytelling — and I mean everybody, not just some old guy in overalls at a folk festival. I mean the woman who cuts your hair, I mean your doctor, I mean your mother. Our great music is country music — which was always working class, from its beginnings in the old-time string bands and ballads right up through honky-tonk and the high lonesome sound of bluegrass to present-day glitzy Nashville and then all the way back around to this revival of traditional music we're currently enjoying.

Look at Dolly Parton, now a national icon. "I had to get rich to sing this poor," she has said, referring to the success of her

last two albums, *The Grass Is Blue,* her take on traditional bluegrass, and the recent *Little Sparrow,* which is old-time, or what she calls her "blue mountain music." Look at Lucinda Williams and Steve Earle and Patti Loveless.

And what about our recent literature? No one could deny that there is a veritable explosion of Appalachian writing today. And a lot of it is hitting the bestseller lists, too. This means it is being read, and widely read, outside the region. I'm talking about Charles Frazier's Civil War novel, *Cold Mountain*, for instance, set in Western North Carolina; about Silas House's wonderful *Clay's Quilt;* about Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer,* which takes place near Emory, Va.; about *Rocket Boys,* both the memoir and the movie; about Sharyn McCrumb's ballad novels

I'm of two minds about all this. I was country, remember, when country wasn't cool. I don't really like to see my favorite places and people be "discovered."

and Robert Morgan's *Gap Creek,* which even got "Oprah-fied," as did Gwyn Hyman Rubio's Eastern Kentucky novel *Icy Sparks.* There's Jan Karon's Mitford series, which is at least *sort of* Appalachian, even though it's Episcopal, since these books *are* set in Blowing Rock, N.C.; and I'm certainly talking about Adriana Trigiani's comic novel, *Big Stone Gap,* and its recent sequel, *Big Cherry Holler. Big Stone Gap* is soon to be a major motion picture, filmed in Big Stone Gap, Va., and directed by Trigiani herself, with Roseanne Cash as its musical director. The film *Songcatcher* traces the adventures of a Boston musicologist who comes to visit her crusading lesbian sister at a settlement school in Madison County, N.C., and sets about "catching" — or transcribing — all the local ballads. Maybe the plot's a little melodramatic and a little too complicated, but the soundtrack is terrific, featuring Sheila Kay Adams, Hazel Dickens, and Iris DeMent, among others.

Clearly, I could go on and on, and I'm not even really getting into visual arts or poetry or design or drama or documentary film. My point is that mainstream American culture is becoming "Appalachian-ized." No matter what you think of NASCAR, for instance — our most successful Appalachian export — it's fast taking over the whole country.

I'm of two minds about all this. I was country, remember, when country wasn't cool. I don't really like to see my favorite places and people be "discovered." I'd rather be sitting on poet Lou Crabtree's porch in Abingdon, Va., in the cool of the evening, talking to her, than hear her interviewed by Noah Adams on NPR. I'd rather drive up a lonely stretch of road near our cabin in Ashe County, N.C., than shop at the brand-new Wal-Mart they're putting in there. (I'd planned to stick with Ray's Hardware in West Jefferson myself, but guess what? It just went out of business.)

Even though I, personally, sometimes wish I could be back in the simpler, saner, safer world of my childhood, eating a piece of fried chicken on a quilt at the drive-in theater while Ralph Stanley plays music on top of the concession stand, I know I can't. The drive-in is long gone, and so am I. But I'll tell you something else — I was mighty proud to be there the night Dr. Ralph played at Carnegie Hall. N&T

Award-winning novelist Lee Smith currently lives in North Carolina with her husband, writer Hal Crowther, and two dogs. Her new novel The Last Girls, *will be published in September 2002.*

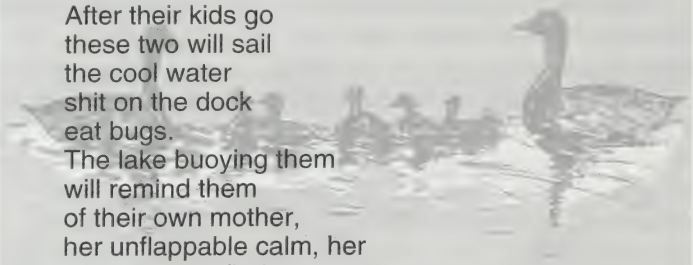
A version of this essay was given as an address to the Appalachian Writers Association meeting in July 2001 at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City and appeared in the August 12, 2001, edition of *The Washington Post,* pp. G1, G5.

Jealous
Mount Saint Francis Lake

I'm jealous of those parents.
Their goslings gliding in a line
between stately Mom and Dad
don't suddenly turn and announce
"I want to go to Interlochen!"

Goslings don't yearn to play
marimba. They don't fly
to snowy Michigan and leave
bereft parents in Knoxville.

It won't cost the farm
to send them to gliding
and honking school.
Alone, their mother and father
won't suddenly turn
to one another and think
"What now?"



After their kids go
these two will sail
the cool water
shit on the dock
eat bugs.
The lake buoying them
will remind them
of their own mother,
her unflappable calm, her
noisy temper flaring
when foxes crept
or humans stomped down to the edge.

Their wings will recall ancestral
flight patterns.
There will be no nostalgia,
no twinges in the feathers,
no grabbing ankles and pulling down.

— Marilyn Kallet

Marilyn Kallet directs the creative writing program at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She is the author of eight books, including most recently Sleeping With One Eye Open: Women Writers and the Art of Survival, *co-edited with Judith Ortiz Cofer.*

Going Global

Mountain People All Over the World Use the Internet to Talk to Each Other

by Margaret Lynn Brown

An Elkins, W.Va., office helps to coordinate a web site that aims to create a global community of scholars, policymakers, and mountain people everywhere.

For the past 12 years, In Praise of Mountain Women, a Dungannon, Va., group, has sponsored a biennial celebration of Appalachian women that includes storytelling and socializing as well as sessions on issues facing women in the mountains. Two-thirds of the 400 or so women who participate in these conferences had never before traveled from their homes to such a meeting; the group raises scholarships for those women to come.

Much to their great amazement, this year In Praise of Mountain Women will take an even bigger leap — to the global stage. Organizers of a United Nations conference, "Celebrating Mountain Women," selected five members of the group to represent the entire Appalachian region. The conference will be held in May in Kathmandu, Nepal.

"This is a tremendous affirmation of what we have been doing," says Anne Leibig, a therapist and one of the group's founders. [See Leibig, Anne, "Becoming a Celebrant in Appalachia" in *Now & Then,* Vol. 11, No. 3 (Fall 1994), pp. 33-35.] Leibig, the only member of the group who has traveled internationally, will be accompanied by a 28-year-old divorced mother of two, a 45-year-old grandmother who is legally blind, a widow who teaches at a Head Start school, and a single woman struggling in a low-wage job. "We hope to learn what mountain women all over the world have been doing, which will expand the way we think about our own lives," notes Leibig.

At press time, the group has not yet raised the $2,700 each needs for a round trip ticket, but they are very excited about being selected for the conference. Although she can't vouch for it, Leibig thinks it might well be the first Dungannon-to-Kathmandu connection.

Swiss Foreign Aid Launches a Web Site

This unlikely pairing, in fact, resulted from the Internet, more specifically from a web site called Mountain Forum: A Global Network for Mountain Communi-

Renda Faye Keith

Kathy Flores (l, rear), Jenifer Vautrin (r, rear), Renda Faye Keith, (l, front), Winnie Davis (c), and Anne Leibig await their trip to Kathmandu.

ties, Environments, and Sustainable Development (www.mtnforum.org), which Leibig discovered through a friend. Folks Leibig met through the Mountain Forum encouraged the Dungannon group to apply to go to Kathmandu and even gave them suggestions on how best to complete their application.

Sponsored by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on four continents, the Mountain Forum seeks to connect people living at high elevations — whether the hills are in Nepal or in the Southern Appalachians — with scholars and policymakers. NGO is the accepted international term for nonprofit or independent organizations. Designed with few graphics and fonts, the Mountain Forum helps those with relatively unsophisticated connections to the Internet find access to the latest research, cutting-edge scholars, and innovative policymaking.

Designed with few graphics and fonts, the Mountain Forum helps those with relatively unsophisticated connections to the Internet find access to the latest research, cutting-edge scholars, and innovative policymaking.

The idea for such a web site grew out of the U.N.'s 1992 Conference on Environment, commonly known as the Earth Summit and held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Specifically, the Mountain Forum grew out of Agenda 21 of the resulting U.N. document, the "Rio Declaration on Environment and Development." Agenda 21 is essentially a blueprint for sustainable development. The United Nations then charged its Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with exploring this agenda.

So the FAO gathered together a group of NGOs in 1995 in order to come up with an agenda for the world's mountains. Although the 123 representatives attending this second meeting could not agree on a common agenda, they did agree about the difficulty of communication in remote areas. When the Swiss government offered a hefty grant to start a web site, the Mountain Forum was born.

Why the Swiss? According to Elizabeth Byers, a hydrologist who also works as a coordinator for Mountain Forum, the Alpine country has done an enormous amount of research on the special policy needs of mountain ecologies. "We have very few laws in the United States, for example, that recognize the special needs of mountain environments. We look at them as 'natural resources' intended to service urban areas," she comments. "Europe, on the other hand, particularly Switzerland, has begun to pass laws that require special investment for the mountains in infrastructure, health care, and ecological management." Proud of this research and policy-making expertise, the Swiss are eager to share their resources with other mountainous areas.

Conferring Online

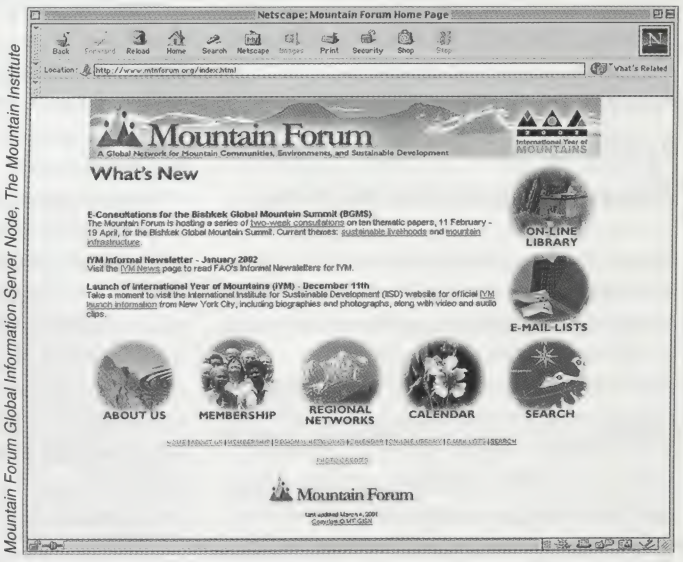
The U.S. coordinator of the Mountain Forum is the Mountain Institute, for which Byers also works. With offices located in Elkins, W.Va., and headquarters in Harrisonburg, Va., the 31-year-old institute is a nonprofit educational and scientific organization whose mission is to advance mountain cultures and preserve mountain environments. They are joined by NGOs in Kathmandu, Nepal; Nairobi, Kenya; Gland, Switzerland; Lima, Peru; and Banff, Canada, all of which help grease the proverbial wheels of the web site.

One of the most useful aspects of the web site is the online library, which includes everything from "Forest Management Plans in Papua New Guinea" to "Community Control of Forests in Mexico and Honduras" to "Virunga Volcanoes, Central Africa: Conserving a Rare Species in a Troubled Region." In this context, it's interesting to find environmental writer Chris Bolgiano's paper, "National Forests as the New Appalachian Commons," from the 1999 Appalachian Studies Association meeting.

Online conferences, held biannually on the average, on topics such as "Paying for Mountains: Innovative Mechanisms and Promising Examples for Financing Conservation and Sustainable Development" can also be found on the site. For their online conferences, the Mountain Forum receives papers via e-mail, fax, or regular posted mail, which are then shared via the e-mail lists. A special web interface allows for discussions as well as provides an archive of those discussions.

What's most fun to read, however, are the well-indexed discussion lines. At first, it's quite obvious that the majority of the 2,900 members are still professionals — scholars, government officials, and NGO representatives. "We don't have to recruit professionals because they are so familiar with the Internet," admits Byers. Indeed, many of the postings are conference and workshop announcements or graduate students looking for leads for their research.

"But we are actively recruiting community organizations — those who really need this information," she adds, and these are surely the most interesting discussion lines. "I am an indigenous woman of Nepal" begins one posting on the site. "I am writing to ask you to join me in helping some fellow environmentalists who are working to prevent environmental destruction in the Kingdom of Nepal." Another starts out, "Our most sacred mountain of *NUVATUKA'OVI/ DOKO'OOSLID* is at dire risk of desecration. Known locally in Flagstaff, Ariz., as the San Francisco Peaks, this



Mountain Forum Global Information Server Node, The Mountain Institute

Mountain Forum's web site was designed to allow access to people with unsophisticated equipment. Well-indexed discussion lines, online conferences, and an online library increase the usefulness of the site.

mountain is considered the spiritual center of Hopi and Navajo lands."

A "Reality Link"

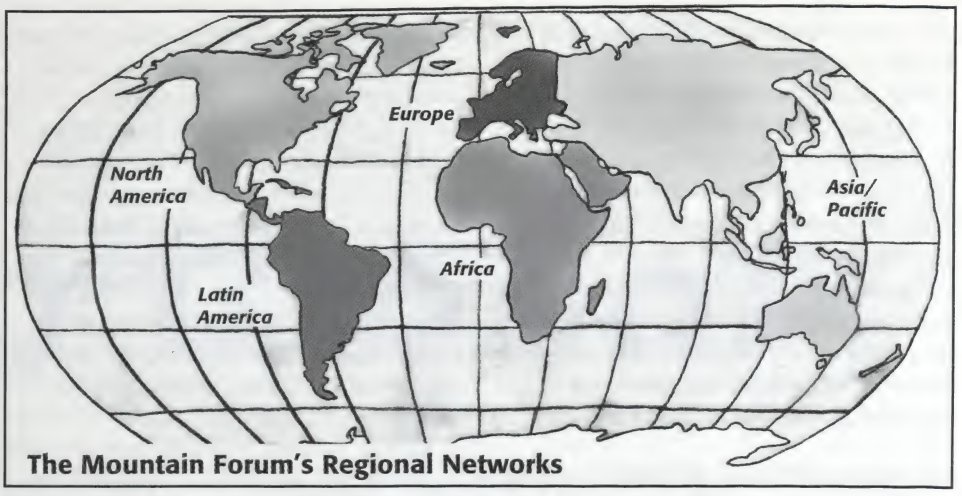
Byers says she feels most proud of community-to-community exchanges that occur regularly across national, political, and cultural divides. For example, Shafqat Hussain, a wildlife manager in the remote Hindu Kush Mountains of northern Pakistan, was facing difficulties with local snow leopard populations. This beautiful and endangered predator was killing the livestock of local herders. In an understandable effort to protect their livelihoods, the herders were hunting the snow leopards almost to extinction. Hussain sent a plea to the global Mountain Forum for advice.

Within days, he received responses from wildlife managers working in other parts of the Himalayas who had been dealing with the identical problem. Some of them had developed successful livestock insurance schemes; others had managed to develop wildlife-based ecotourism as an alternative livelihood. Out of this information shared by Mountain Forum participants, Hussain developed Project Snow Leopard (PSL), a pilot program launched in Baltistan in 1998. The program involves a partnership between local farmers and private enterprise in the form of an insurance scheme combined with ecotourism activities. As Hussain explained in an August 2000 issue of *Mountain Research and Development,* "Farmers jointly finance the insurance scheme through payment of premiums per head of livestock they own, while the remaining funds are provided by profits from trekking expeditions focusing on the snow leopard. The insurance scheme is jointly managed by a village management committee and PSL staff." This dialogue, begun in 1998, continues today on the Mountain Forum as Hussain and his colleagues transcend national political differences among Pakistan, India, Nepal, and China to solve a common conservation challenge.

Appalachian voices are also frequently represented in the global dialogue of the Mountain Forum.

Byers also values the "reality link" between policymakers and local community leaders that these members make possible. "These are people in very marginal areas — they've gone from living without roads or electricity to a sudden confrontation with the modern world through television and e-mail. They are people whose voices are not often heard. And because of the Mountain Forum, their actual viewpoints are regularly included in U.N. documents." She cites the example of an indigenous Sherpa leader from Mount Everest, who served as the global discussion moderator for the Mountain Forum during the year the United Nations was crafting its policy on sustainable forest management.

Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa was an invited speaker at the Eighth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, held at the U.N.'s New York headquarters in April 2000. "When Sherpa spoke at the United Nations, the room was absolutely quiet," remembers Byers. "His gentle voice seemed to come straight from the high, clear air of Mount Everest, and his wisdom about mountain forests and the people who depend on them infused those in the chamber with humility and hope. The audience of polished diplomats became more human somehow, more self-conscious about the tremendous divide between their words and world and his world of jagged peaks, sacred landscape, and harsh reality."



The Mountain Institute

The Mountain Forum's Regional Networks

Each network has a coordinating agency and pages on the Mountain Forum's web site, with relevant information and links related to specific geographic areas.

Wanted: Indigenous Members

Appalachian voices are also frequently represented in the global dialogue of the Mountain Forum. In fact, an example of heritage tourism from West Virginia will be included as a "best practice" in the global policy document being developed in March 2002 for the U.N.-declared International Year of Mountains 2002.

The membership lists themselves are another interesting feature of the site. If you click on the mountain atlas, for example, and then click on South Africa, you will get the names of 36 people interested in the Drakensburg Mountains. Among those listed are a member of the Mountain Club of South Africa, someone from the Ministry of Agriculture, and a woman from the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems and ByProducts. What seems clear from such an exercise, however, is that indigenous members are still in short supply.

Although the Mountain Forum will no doubt continue to push for more grassroots connections, the women from Dungannon are grateful for their newfound international "fame." As Leibig puts it, "Such a gathering will enable the mountain women's network not only to grow and strengthen as agents of change but also to make a significant contribution to the policies and practices that empower mountain women and their communities." N&T

Visit the Mountain Forum at www.mtnforum.org.

Margaret Lynn Brown is the author of The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains. *Because some of the most interesting mail she has gotten on her book is from policymakers trying to start national parks in Costa Rica and Africa, Brown hopes to join the dialogue on the Mountain Forum.*

The Ugly Appalachian

A View from England

by Parks Lanier

An Appalachian abroad finds himself reading an English reporter's account of life in Eastern Kentucky, a land of dull inbred children and dope dealers.

It was May 1992, and I was in England, reveling in Sherwood Forest and Newstead Abbey, thanks to an education exchange between Virginia's Radford University and the University of Nottingham. My room in Cripps Hall was on a large quad with a nearby dining hall where I enjoyed breakfast with the students. One morning over bangers and beans, I pulled a Mark Twain and panicked medical students who were cramming for an anatomy exam by innocently inquiring where the philtrum was. But usually, I just read a London newspaper and behaved myself.

By the time I got to breakfast on May 17, the knowledgeable young men who knew exactly which tabloids were the most lurid and lewd had already scavenged the Sunday papers. The sabbath, Americans soon learn, is prime time for naked women to appear in London newspapers. All that was left for me was a rather dull-looking *Observer Magazine.*

Its black-and-white cover did show a woman, but she was not very beautiful, and she was fully dressed in jeans and a T-shirt. Around her were gathered three very young daughters, the cutest huddled on her lap. At a glance, the photo looked very much like something out of James Agee and Walker Evans' *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.* That was deliberate, I soon realized, for down in the left corner were the words, "Whispering Grass: Marijuana — The Secret Cash Crop of America's Poor Whites." This was indeed a "poor white" American mother and her children — from Louisiana, I thought, or perhaps even California.

A quick look at six more photos inside, some quite large, told me I was looking at an article about Eastern Kentucky, "the back of beyond." Linda Grant wrote the piece, "The Green Green Grass of Home." I wondered how in the world a British reporter had ever found such people to write about. And then I remembered. As I was winging toward Gatwick Airport near London, the queen was winging toward Kentucky to buy new horses. Some of the reporters following her had obviously gone adventuring into the dark and bloody ground. Perhaps *The Observer's* food and wine editor, a Kentucky native (the article said), had put them on the scent. I could just hear him whispering conspiratorially, "Forget the queen. Get somebody to take you to Mud Creek. That's where the real story is."

Perhaps *The Observer* even had it in for Her Britannic Majesty. The article would, by implication, expose her as an exploiter of the downtrodden and poor. While she was living it up near Lexington, spending thousands of pounds for thousands of pounds of horseflesh, there were Kentuckians at her back door like Lazarus begging with the dogs for crumbs from the rich.

Women and children were prominent in the photos. On one page, three photos bore the caption, "Drugs and dynamite: a government anti-marijuana raid meets with sullen indifference from poor farmers and their children." The first picture

> I was looking at an article about Eastern Kentucky, "the back of beyond."

showed two men in camouflage cutting and stacking marijuana plants. Below, there was a shot of two men working in a cornfield. One was hoeing, one running a tiller. They could easily have been my

dad and brother. To the right was the largest picture, the one depicting the "dynamite" of the caption. It showed two little girls at play. One was comfy inside a wooden box, reading her coloring book. On the box was "American Cyanamid Company Explosives Department." Perhaps her grandpaw had given the box to her. The stenciled address for the company was so old that it said "New York 20, New York" — no zip code. The box was almost an antique — some "dynamite." No one in the photos looked sullen or indifferent. The men were too busy. The children were too innocent.

I knew the text of the article was going to be an exercise in the *Deliverance* syndrome. Whereas assailing Americans might come naturally to a reporter from England, he or she has to be taught or told how to think stereotypical thoughts about Appalachia. This one had received a very good crash course. For example, Grant does not say Mud Creek is "back of beyond." She says, "East Kentucky is the back of beyond." That's where the queen goes for her horses, "back of beyond," like an unmapped Africa where Stanley might search for Livingston.

"The South begins here," Grant writes. "Along the state's eastern edge march the Appalachian mountains. You reach it from New York via Tennessee, one state down." In other words, "you can't get there from here." She says that as they zigzagged from Nashville to Lexington on a 12-seater plane, she overhears a scandalous story of corrupt Kentucky sheriffs "elected, of course, in this land of democracy." How the sheriff of Nottingham got his job I do not recall, but wasn't he corrupt, too? Wasn't that why Robin Hood took to Sherwood Forest? Grant makes no comparisons.

"Welcome to Kentucky," she writes, "home of the poorest people in America — white, pot-smoking rednecks." I wonder how many Brits had to run to their *Oxford English Dictionary* for that one. My edition is so old that *rednecked* refers only to birds and does not cite humorist Jeff Foxworthy at all. The helpful story goes on to recite the story of LBJ and the War on Poverty. "Shocked by the hunger and sickness ..." she writes of the former president. "Little has changed," she concludes.

Grant has even heard the story of the San Francisco tour company that advertised, "See the Third World in your own backyard," touting tours of Appalachia as if it were the Nile or the Amazon. "It received such hostile press locally that the tour was cancelled," she says. The implication is that she — part of another press from another part of the world — has managed to sneak in and get the goods on this Third World outpost of poverty, hunger, sickness, and lawlessness the way novelist Joseph Conrad's mariner Marlow sneaks into the demented ivory trader Kurtz's compound. What price the heart of darkness?

Leonard Freed/Magnum

In a photo accompanying the article in the *Observer Magazine,* a little girl colors while sitting inside an old dynamite box.

By paragraph four, the reader has had a crash course in "illicit stills" and "moonshine," which marijuana has supplanted as the Appalachian cash product of choice. As I read on, I can hear that great defender of Appalachian culture, the late Cratis Williams, speaking sympathetically about the Celtic pot-still, birthright of every Appalachian—whether Scot, Irish, or Scots-Irish. Ignorant of the history of her own countrymen, the English reporter has only the dismissive Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms phrase, "illicit moonshine," in her vocabulary.

> Whereas assailing Americans might come naturally to a reporter from England, he or she has to be taught or told how to think stereotypical thoughts about Appalachia. This one had received a very good crash course.

"The route to Appalachia," Grant says, "is along great highways built during the war on poverty. Their main purpose has been to carry the poor out, to, in particular, the car factories of Detroit up north." Shades of Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker!* "But off the freeway," she continues, "along dirt roads you can't make sense of on a map, live barefoot children with dull inbred faces in tumbledown shacks—everything looking just as it did when the photographers of the Thirties came to document the effects of the Depression and found the forgotten people who are now America's new dope dealers." Obviously, as the accompanying photos prove, dealing dope does not even buy shoes or decent housing. Perhaps the "inbred" are too "dull" to make money. Who has planted these concepts of the Ugly Appalachian in the reporter's narrow mind?

Next she summarizes the history of Kentucky. Daniel Boone—and his "pioneers, all English"—cross the Cumberland Gap, "inspiring the song of the same name that has passed into the folk-song repertoire." I laugh at that, wondering how many English readers know what she is talking about—perhaps more than I think. For just a few days earlier, I had seen a flock of English children settle beneath the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest. "Now, children, we shall sing of Robin Hood!" glowed their teacher. My heart had pounded with joy. I was going to hear an ancient English folk ballad from the mouths of English babes in the wood. "Robin Hood, Robin Hood," they began lustily. "Feared by the bad, loved by the good, Robin Ho-o-od, Robin Ho-o-od." It was the theme song straight from American television. So English readers might know the song about Cumberland Gap after all.

"But later," the history of Kentucky continues, "the Eyrie [sic] Canal was dug and the West could be reached by steamboat. Boone's pioneers ... were cut off. No one came to join them." I have never heard this story. It is as bad as *Robinson Crusoe,* this tale of Englishmen marooned in the mountains of Kentucky. "No one came to join them." Chilling words. "They interbred with each other and sometimes the Indians."

This is worse than the cannibalism of the Donner Party: sex-starved English men and women forced to interbreed and, when that method has been exhausted, forced to breed—shudder—with savages. To what horrors must Crusoe have subjected his man Friday! In Kentucky, it is so bad "they forgot where they had come from, forgot that they had ever been anywhere else but these green mountains." Perhaps Grant has some vague memory of The Lost Colony of Roanoke upon which she thinks she has stumbled.

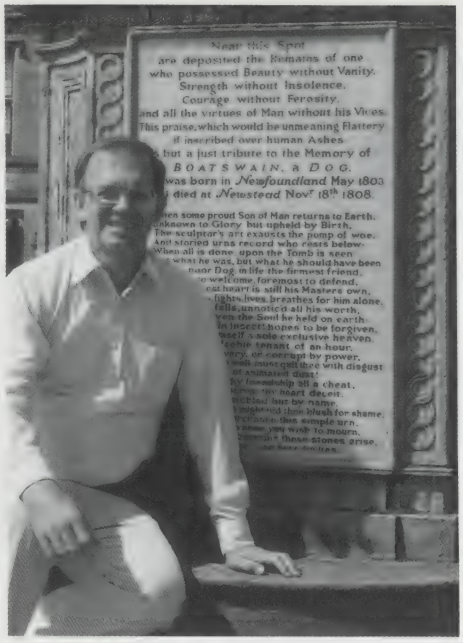
After the history lesson, I am introduced to community activist Eula Hall who "runs" the Mud Creek Clinic in Floyd County. I do not know if Hall has ever seen herself in print, but there in distant Nottingham, she comes across as a real heroine. I suspect, however, that her words in print are strung together differently than the way they were assembled in real life. I recognize journalistic shorthand when I see it. An Appalachian reader can fill in the holes scattered throughout her remarks on black-lung disease, the dangers of tobacco, and the arguments for or against the legalization of marijuana. Grant, however, wants gentle Eula to come across as a latter-day version of Sherwood Anderson's daring female moonshiner Kit Brandon, ready to run weed by the dark of night in low-slung cars. Hall was not speaking so much *for* marijuana as she was *against* tobacco. After all, she is a public health worker.

Abruptly, Grant announces, "Appalachia has the highest rate of illiteracy in the country, the highest teenage pregnancy rate. Mud Creek people without mains drainage [that's Brit for *sewers*] still drink contaminated water from their own wells or siphoned off from a nearby mine." Were that true, Eula Hall's clinic would be overrun with hepatitis cases. None are mentioned. Illiteracy, pregnancy, contaminated water, starvation, unemployment, litigious coal companies, black lung—quite a checklist of problems in Mud Creek. The solution: marijuana. But Hall readily admits, "We don't have no trouble in this clinic with drug addiction."

Grant notes appalling housing conditions in the Mud Creek area, "some of the strangest juxtapositions of housing in America." I have seen some juxtapositions of housing in the coal mining areas of Nottingham, too. Immense Wollaton Hall, built circa 1588 by wealthy merchant Sir Francis Willoughby, had "exploited labour" written all over it. While in Mud Creek, Grant beholds "the ubiquitous insignia of American affluence, lawn ornaments—cement deer, grazing or gambolling." At Wollaton Hall, I have seen hundreds of imprisoned deer fleeing the tourists. What conclusions ought I to draw from that?

> Illiteracy, pregnancy, contaminated water, starvation, unemployment, litigious coal companies, black lung—quite a checklist of problems in Mud Creek. The solution: marijuana.

And as for Grant's sneering aside, "judging by the flower beds, a traveling salesman in gold-painted neo-classical statuary must recently have passed by,"


Near this Spot
are deposited the Remains of one
who possessed Beauty without Vanity.
Strength without Insolence.
Courage without Ferosity.
and all the virtues of Man without his Vices.
This praise,which would be unmeaning Flattery
if inscribed over human Ashes
is but a just tribute to the Memory of
BOATSWAIN, a DOG.
was born in Newfoundland May 1803
died at Newstead Nov^r 18^th 1808.

Nancy Taylor

Parks Lanier sits beside the tomb of Lord Byron's dog, Boatswain. It is located at Byron's Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire, England.

I would ask her who serves as the bad-taste patrol in Notts. Somewhere there, as in Mud Creek, one surely could find "the most deplorable shacks imaginable … children barefoot, the parents dressed in the cheapest clothes" and "vehicles rust[ing] away in the rain," but I do not know where to look beyond the ivied walls of Nottingham U.

The reporter draws a bleak picture of economic disparity in Mud Creek, imagining a rich fellow named Hall and his poor distant kinsman. "Rich Halls and poor Halls," she writes, "will lie together in the same private family burying grounds up the hills behind the houses, the graves with their plastic flowers a technicolour Disneyland seen from the road." The horrour of egalitarian America, where rich are poor are buried side by side, is too much to believe. In England, the poor Hall would get his "short and simple annals" in a country churchyard, if I remember my Thomas Gray and his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" correctly. The rich Hall, on the other hand, might make it as far as Westminster Abbey into its technicolour Disneyland of enameled tombs the likes of which Americans have never seen from the road, or otherwise. At the Abbey, one must pay to see bad taste.

The checklist of stereotypes goes on and on. Women wash clothes in the yard, children play in dynamite boxes, a woman with a common-law husband has a common-law sister-in-law. Or is that "sister-in-common-law"? The exact phrase, I think, is "English common law," but I would not press the point with the reporter.

The hills of Kentucky are not alive with the sound of music for this reporter. "Kentucky people are laconic," Grant observes, "speaking in a sing-song voice typical of mountain people (imitating, perhaps, all those ups and downs)." The geographical imperative is a new one on me, and I have been teaching English for nearly twenty-five years. Sweet Thames, run softly until I end my song! How does one then account for Cockney in London? It must be all the ups and downs of appalling London architecture.

"This is no place for the law," Grant maintains. "Mud Creek people like to settle things for themselves. People die violent deaths, almost inconsequently." Jack the Ripper crosses my mind, ever so briefly. She further notes that Eula Hall's clinic offers pamphlets on spouse abuse. "Do wives batter their husbands here?" she asks rhetorically, then quotes an answer from Hall. "Well, no, they don't abuse them. They just kill them straight off." A shocked Lord Plushbottom in London must have read Eula's words at face value. Her laugh — and I'm sure there was a laugh — does not translate into English.

Worse, Grant swears she heard a little girl (the one playing in a nearby dynamite box) "happily babble" the words, "It weren't such a bad thing that they killed him." Perhaps the child is just singing one of those old ballads brought over from England, and Grant has missed a collector's treasure. After all, those old songs dating from Henry VIII's time and earlier are full of spouse abuse.

The article concludes with a dramatic description of the full force of the Kentucky State Marijuana Strike Force gathering army helicopters to do battle with the denizens of Mud Creek — that is, when they are not distracted by "the Dairy Queen … hamburgers and fries and shakes …" Grant joins a convoy of Army trucks driven by "Appalachia's finest … who shoot straight and are used to rough times. They are perhaps not too bright, but good enough to look for marijuana, which they shouldn't have too much trouble recognizing." Is Lord Plushbottom reading between the lines, there in the comfort of his private London club? After all, does he not also live by the motto, Takes One to Know One? "The military and the derelict car factories of Detroit are the only way out of Appalachia for these in-bred descendants of the English yeomanry," Grant concludes.

There, around me in the dormitory reading room of a fine British university, other descendants of English yeomanry were gathered for breakfast, their noses buried in the Sunday tabloid breasts and buttocks of European beauties. Perhaps some of their fortunate mates have escaped into the military and are exiled to Scotland or Northern Ireland. Perhaps some have gone to the factories of Manchester or Birmingham. Who could take me on a tour of their homes? Who would know the secret paths to their back gardens?

"Kentucky people are laconic," Grant observes, "speaking in a sing-song voice typical of mountain people (imitating, perhaps, all those ups and downs.)" The geographical imperative is a new one on me.

I would promise to draw no conclusions about the lack of central heating, strange loos, or kidney pies. If their folks asked about Kentucky, I would do my best to sing the praises of my friends, writers and book lovers George Ella Lyon and Gurney Norman, Albert Stewart and James Still, Verna Mae Slone and Sidney Farr, Garry Barker and George Brosi, all of whom have been so wonderfully shaped by their ups and downs. Most of all, I would try to be fair. N&T

Parks Lanier is an unashamed lover of things British and Appalachian, especially if they are words or chocolate.

We Were Poor But . . .

How Appalachians and Italians Look at Poverty

by Alessandro Portelli

In Italy, the poor are often seen as saintly. In Appalachia, being poor is almost a sin. An Italian explores why these differences exist and how they affect people's lives.

There are poor Appalachians, and there are poor Italians. But how the poor regard themselves in Appalachia is very different from the way the poor see themselves in Italy.

I came to Harlan County, Ky., in the late 1980s as an Italian-born professor of American Literature at the University of Rome to conduct an oral history project that I have continued off and on now for more than 15 years. It was listening to the stories of the people of Harlan County and paying attention to the art Appalachians produce and enjoy that threw these cultural differences into sharp relief.

School Lunches & School Clothes

Dolly Parton's "Coat of Many Colors," a song released in 1971, is a very revealing lyric for an observer from another country. In this popular, explicitly autobiographical song, she recalled "a box of rags that someone gave us/And how my mama put those rags to use." By the late fall, she reports, her mother had resourcefully fashioned those small bits of multicolored cloth into a coat for her daughter.

Annie Napier, a community activist and wife of a disabled coal miner in Cranks Creek, Harlan County, Ky., possessed similar memories from her own mountain childhood in the 1950s. "Yeah, I think a lot of people is ashamed of the way they was raised," said Napier. "We never had really good clothes to wear. We wore patches on our britches 'cause we had to."

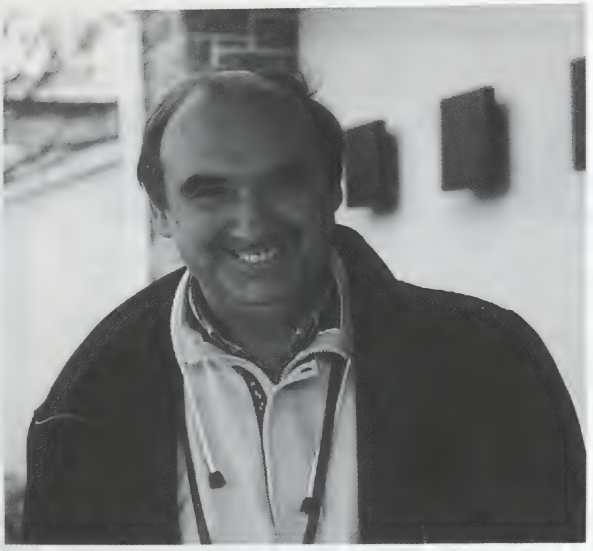
"With patches on my britches," sang Parton, "and holes in both my shoes/in my coat of many colors/I hurried off to school/Just to find the others laughing/And making fun of me/In my coat of many colors/My momma made for me." Having *good* clothes, as both Parton and Napier painfully discover, does not mean simply having clothes warm enough to protect them from the harsh rural mountain winter. It also means having clothes decent enough to appear in public.

Mildred Shackleford, a zinc miner and poet born in Harlan County in the 1950s, remembered her school lunches as a similar source of shame. The more affluent children came with lunch boxes filled with bologna sandwiches made on white bread. "We didn't have any of that," recalled Shackleford in a 1988 interview. "If we took our lunch to school, then we had to take ham and biscuits. There were even times when my sister and I took buttermilk and cornbread in a glass jar in a brown paper bag to school." There was one family who was even poorer than Shackleford and her sister. "They brought lunch in a tin pail,

> My own Italian culture tends to perceive poverty as the product of social conditions. Americans often see poverty as an individual, not a social, phenomenon. Thus, in America, poverty is often represented as primarily a state of mind.

like miners used to take, and they had soup beans in it with a piece of cornbread on top of it. And I will always remember, their name was Angels, and people would make fun of 'em."

Of course, it isn't just in Appalachia that school lunches and clothes mark status and class. Aurora, a printshop worker from Terni, Italy, remembered that in the 1930s, "we would always sit in the last row, and it bothered you to see other girls who came to school with their ham sandwiches. The teachers all the time — 'My greetings to your lady mother ...' The only time they'd ask my mother in was when I'd beat up the other girls."



Charles Hardy III

Oral histories conducted in Appalachian Kentucky led Alessandro Portelli to compare Appalachian and Italian views of poverty.

Anger & Shame

It is anger, not a sense of shame, that permeates Italian memories of poverty. Naturally, just as a number of Italian working-class narratives sometimes express shame, there is certainly anger to be found in the Appalachian stories. However, the sources of anger in the Italian and Appalachian narratives are quite different.

While Aurora is angry *because* she is poor, Shackleford remembers being angry because the poor were *shamed.* "It was just so unfair that these little Angel kids sittin' here just as sweet as they could be — everybody was makin' fun of 'em because they was eatin' buttermilk and cornbread and soup beans. I never did have much respect for a kind of system that always picked out weaker people or people they think is just a little bit different."

Due to the joint influence of Catholicism and Marxism, my own Italian culture tends to perceive poverty as the product of social conditions, specifically as the consequence of living in a class society. Furthermore, poverty is not a sign of a lack of independence and moral degradation on the part of the poor. In fact, it is often associated with virtue and holiness. Italy's patron saint, after all, is St. Francis of Assisi, usually described as *il poverello,* the poor little man from Assisi. He is a saint precisely because he chose to be poor. The narratives of Italian working-class people often actually exaggerate their poverty in order to draw attention to the injustices they have endured and to assert their pride in their struggles. Appalachian narratives, in contrast, talk about poverty in terms of poor individuals being made to feel different, to feel excluded from a group.

In the United States, Calvinism, the frontier, and the tradition of seeing social mobility as the answer to difficulties means that Americans often see poverty as an individual, not a social, phenomenon. Thus, in America, poverty is often represented as primarily a state of mind. When confronted with her classmates' scorn of her coat of many colors, Parton "tried to make them see/That one is only poor/Only if they choose to be." And the Nashville star clearly isn't choosing to be poor. "Now I know we had no money/But I was rich as I could be/In my coat of many colors/My momma made for me/Made just for me."

Never Poor in Spirit

Instead of exaggerating their hardships as many of their Italian counterparts do, Appalachians — especially those who grew up between 1930 and 1960 — sidestep the shame associated with being poor by downplaying the actual poverty they've experienced and stressing the positive elements in their lives. They were not really poor — or, yes, they *were* poor, but ...

Many emphasize that while they were certainly not rich, they did not lack for the basic necessities. "We ate really well," Shackleford asserted. "We had a four-room house that had pine floors and pine walls, you know. We burned coal."

Most importantly, many Appalachians feel the need to insist that material deprivations do not imply the poor's spiritual degradation. Instead, they insist, dealing with poverty actually helps foster such values as solidarity, community, and mutual cooperation. The late Myles Horton, a cultural and political organizer and founder of the Highlander Research and Education Center, now located in New Market, Tenn., succinctly said, "We were poor, but we were never poor in spirit."

Spiritual wealth is summed up in one word: Love. This love is found within the family — dispensed primarily by the mother. Again, facing her detractors, Parton "told them of the love/My momma sewed in every stitch" of her coat.

Love, however, does not serve so much as an inspiration to rebel against material poverty as a consolation for it. For example, in the work of African American poet Nikki Giovanni — who spent part of her childhood in Knoxville, Tenn., not far from the Highlander Center or from Sevierville, Tenn., where Parton was raised — we find exactly the same equation as the one espoused by Parton, the same opposition of love and money. In "Nikki-Rosa," one of her best-known poems, Giovanni talks about having grown up poor but contends that white critics would be mistaken if they pity her for having an unhappy childhood. Those critics never understand that "black love is wealth" — in other words, they were poor, but ... they had love.

> The Appalachian culture's egalitarian spirit may express itself less by attempting to diminish the actual inequalities in society than by simply denying those inequalities' existence.

Although poor Appalachians often downplay the hardships their poverty imposed on them, like their Italian counterparts, they rebuff others' attempts to make them feel ashamed of their

socioeconomic status by nurturing a sense of pride. We may not have been all that poor, but... the fact that things weren't easy made us better people. "We growed up hard," Napier allows. But as a result, "we all worked together, we played together, we cried together — and we still do." So in the long run, growing up under difficult conditions produces strength of character, toughness, and self-reliance, while at the same time, fostering an ability to be tender and show compassion to others facing similar hardships.

Just More or Less Neighbors

The self-sufficient family farm epitomizes the mountaineers' proud sense of personal autonomy. Parton's assertion — we had no money, but we were rich all the same — takes on another more literal meaning: The family is not just rich in the love they feel for each other; living on the family farm proves that existing outside the mainstream market economy does not necessarily mean destitution. In fact, money is largely irrelevant. "You raised everything," says Plennie Hall, a retired coal miner from Harlan County. "You raised your meat and your corn and everything." Just as the *farm family* is a supportive emotional unit, the *family farm* is a self-supporting, self-enclosed economic unit.

Experience, however, sometimes contradicts these narratives of autonomy and self-support. Harlan County resident Debbie Spicer grew up on a farm where her family did indeed raise all they ate, but they did not get to eat all they raised. They were sharecroppers, turning over a third of their corn crop as rent for the house where they lived and the fields they worked. When I asked her who owned the land, she replied, "Just people, just more or less neighbors."

> Even the dramatic practices of Appalachian folk religion, like snake-handling, have come to signify a metaphor for how you go about beating the odds of survival.

My question was based on my assumption that poverty exists within a framework of class differences, where some own the means of agricultural production and others don't. Spicer's response denies that social structure had anything to do with her economic circumstances. There were no real class differences between owners and renters, she avows. They were all just "neighbors." She thus chases from her garden the snake of inequality.

A Revelation

Raised in a coal-mining family, Johnny Woodward was working at a community college in Cumberland, Ky., at the time I interviewed him in November 1990. "There's a friend of mine who has a very profound statement about growing up in a coal camp and being a poor kid," he told me. "He was poor, didn't know he was poor. And he said that all his life, he would overhear conversation from his own cousins talking about 'them poor sons-of-a-bitches down there,' and he didn't know until he was 16 years old that *he* was the poor sons-of-a-bitches they was talkin' about. That just depressed him beyond no means. He really didn't know it was a bad shape he was in until somebody told him." Woodward knew just how his friend felt. "I resent the fact that I had to find out that I *was* poor and that I was, I guess, underprivileged — in the truest sense of the word."

Especially in the relatively self-contained and egalitarian context of Appalachia, you do not feel poor because people who are also poor surround you. Woodward and his friend were depressed not by the poverty itself but by their awareness of it.

The Appalachian culture's egalitarian spirit may express itself less by attempting to diminish the actual inequalities in society than by simply denying those inequalities' existence. The poor in Appalachia often resist the idea that they have any "betters," that anybody is significantly wealthier or more powerful than they are. This tendency helps us understand Spicer's denial that the owners of the land her family farmed were any better off than her own family. As long as everybody is more or less equally poor, there is no wound to pride in accepting help from others, who later might need help from you so that they do not derive any superior standing from having dispensed aid. The story the culture tells itself is that people were good to *each other:* Accepting help did not constitute being on the receiving end of charity but was instead evidence of cooperation and solidarity within the community.

Is Poverty Un-American?

This attitude changes with the younger generations. "We didn't know what the rest of the world was like," says Woodward, remembering his youth in the late 1960s. He uses a term that locates poverty within a vertical or hierarchical socioeconomic framework: *underprivileged.* To people raised in the 1960s rather than in the 1930s or 1950s, the growing awareness of Appalachia's underprivileged position vis-à-vis the rest of the country brought with it the awareness of the privilege and discrimination that exists within the Appalachian culture itself as well as in its relationship to the rest of the country.

So in some ways, a subjective sense of poverty in Appalachia is a consequence of the widening horizons that went along with modernization: While the demise of self-sufficient agriculture, mechanization, unemployment, and pollution were eroding the region's economic base, migration and television gave Appalachians a vision of other standards of living. At the same time, the War on Poverty declared by President Lyndon Johnson in his 1964 State of the Union address created a stigmatizing association between Appalachia as a whole and poverty. Suddenly, there were more things to be wanted and fewer ways either to obtain them or to compensate for their lack.

It is one thing to be poor where poverty is an acknowledged, if not necessarily accepted, aspect of the social landscape, as it has been, say, in parts of Southern Italy. It is quite another to be poor in the United States, a society that prides itself on being the wealthiest the world has ever known and that claims to offer to all equal opportunity to accumulate wealth. There is an unspoken sense that poverty is un-American, that the poor are not truly Americans, not really citizens.

In Italy, the poor often see poverty as a consequence of the social structure rather than as a state traceable to a personal fault — sometimes to the point of absolving themselves too easily of personal responsibility. In America, there is a strong in-

ducement to place the blame solely on the individual's own shoulders — sometimes to the point of absolving the social system too easily. To be poor in Southern Italy is to be almost normal, sometimes saintly. To be poor in America is to be an exception, almost a sin.

Appearances

With modernization, not only did the Appalachian poor get to find out what the rest of the world was like, but also the rest of the world took a good look at Appalachia and reported their findings in various television shows, film documentaries, articles, and books. Often, Appalachians took offense when these productions *showed* poverty. People from the region perceived the acknowledgment of poverty in Appalachia less as a way of denouncing poverty than as a way of indicting the poor. This reaction is a consequence of the rhetoric of shame. Since poverty has become almost automatically associated with the region, the message is that *all* Appalachian people are poor and that they are poor *because* they are Appalachian.

Courtesy of Annie Napier

To community activist Annie Napier, growing up poor was what contributed to Appalachians' sense of community and compassion.

I remember driving up the hollers in Cranks Creek with Annie Napier during the Christmas season of 1989. We were delivering food and clothing to the needier people in the area. It was charity all right, collected from churches and humanitarian groups all over the country, but perhaps the fact that it came from a neighbor made the acceptance of it less painful. A Knoxville television crew working on a news story accompanied us — and I noticed that the only people who did not resent being filmed or tape-recorded were the ones who were so desperate they no longer cared. Perhaps this fact also helps shape what finally gets shown on television: the desperately poor and the comfortably well-off. The people who tend to be left out are those who are poor but not desperate.

Here again, attitudes differ between Italy and the United States. In both cultures, poor people care about how they appear. In Italy, however, appearance is more a matter of aesthetics and manners than of morals. In Appalachia, appearances have moral implications; they reinforce the perception that the causes of poverty can be traced to some moral defect in the Appalachian character.

There is, therefore, the need in Appalachia to show the "better" side of things. Local spokespersons insist that the "best" — that is, the elite and the middle class — be shown. Those who cannot appear in their "Sunday best" because they are too poor to afford good clothes still wish to be represented by those who can. If there are some people in Appalachia who are not poor, then the cause-and-effect relationship between poverty and the flawed Appalachian character no longer holds. Yet this results in an attempt to hide poverty away or to blame, once more, its victims.

> While personal independence and the communal support found in traditional culture are essential ingredients of a politics of collective survival, this emphasis on personal responsibility makes the politics of collective change harder to conceive and carry out.

The Culture of Survival

On my first trip to Harlan, my friends at the Highlander Center directed me to seek out a "Survival Center" in Cranks Creek. I had read about socioeconomic conditions, but I implicitly assumed that "survival" was a metaphor and that the center was simply a grassroots cultural organization. The first thing I saw — as I got to the head of the holler, crossed the wooden bridge that spanned the creek, and stepped into Robert and Becky Simpson's house at the center — was a room stacked ceiling-high with jars of baby food. It was my introduction to the literal meaning of a word I was to hear again and again from the people I talked to in Harlan County: *survival.*

"When a baby's born, all the odds in the world was against it, back when I was growing up," recalled Napier about life in the 1950s. "The house is so cold, they're lucky to survive. Most of them is born underweight because of nutrition. You got all the childhood diseases to go through: measles, mumps, chicken pox, and whooping cough. You just think about survival, you know." In the old days, families did not risk giving their babies a name until they reached two. "Tryin' to make a livin'" becomes a painfully literal endeavor.

Even the dramatic practices of Appalachian folk religion, like snake-handling, have come to signify — in my opinion but not necessarily in the congregation's view — a metaphor for how you go about beating the odds of survival. Your power to handle the snake, to take the danger into your hands and hold it just far enough away so that it won't bite, is what keeps you alive. Beating the odds, then, is not accomplished through inertia. It takes an active force — maybe God's, maybe your own — to keep you alive. You're always on the brink, always on thin ice.

Historians now agree that the most important act of resistance that slaves in the U.S. South performed was their very physical and psychological survival, made possible primarily by the community's drawing upon its own cultural resources. Parton's coat of many colors suggests that the same might be true for Appalachian culture: The coat both protected her from the cold and enriched her psychologically by transforming the emblems of destitution into a thing of beauty.

The culture of survival, pride, beauty, and self-reliance offers psychological relief from the degradation of poverty, to be sure, but not from material deprivations. If poverty is a personal trait, then redemption is a personal, not a social, matter. Redemption consists either in preserving one's own personal integrity or in

getting out of the place altogether. Appalachians pay much less attention to the possibility of changing the social structure.

Parton has chosen the second option. The Nashville superstar criticizes her schoolmates for not understanding their own culture — as symbolized by her mother's quilting, a skill that can transform rags to beauty — but Parton uses the music of that culture to get out of the mountains and leave them behind. Hers is, literally, a rags-to-riches story.

Appalachia's ethics of independence and pride teach individuals to do all that is in their power to survive, resist, and prevail — without waiting for help from anyone. These values tend to cause individuals to overlook strategies that involve actions they can do only in cooperation with others and to discount the responsibilities that the society-at-large has towards its members. Thus, while personal independence and the communal support found in traditional culture are essential ingredients of a politics of collective survival, this emphasis on personal responsibility makes the politics of collective change harder to conceive and carry out.

I'd Like to be Something or Other

I would like to end with a 1989 conversation in Cranks Creek with a woman I'll call Kathy Eccles, a conversation that weaves together issues of poverty, representation, and self-esteem. Eccles, who was then in her late 20s, belongs to a generation that neither consoled themselves with the "compensations" enjoyed by people who grew up between the 1930s and the 1950s nor found relief in the militancy and activism of the 1960s.

At the time I spoke to her, she was concerned she might lose her welfare benefits. The food stamp office was beginning to require that recipients attend vocational training classes in order to remain eligible for benefits. She, however, was unable to attend because she could not afford a car. Eccles began to daydream about how she would behave if she were a food stamp office employee. "I'd like to be something or other. And when a poor person come up to me, I could look at 'em, say, 'Yeah, I know how you feel there.' And if I couldn't he'p them, and they didn't have no money, I'd say, 'Well, I'll take care of it myself.'"

As a poor person on welfare, she felt like a nobody, a nonperson. Her fantasy, then, hinged on humanizing this system by making it more personal and neighborly. If she were behind that desk, she could say "I know how you feel" because she has firsthand knowledge of being poor. By saying "I'll take care of it myself," she would offer help to the welfare recipient as an equal. There is a sense that Eccles pictured herself on both sides of the desk, that the person she envisioned helping is herself.

External and internal obstacles, however, stand in the way of her realizing this vision. The most problematic obstacle was that Eccles couldn't read, and her low self-esteem prevented her from taking the first steps towards overcoming that difficulty.

Napier, her neighbor and friend, tried to encourage her to get an education. "You can do anything you want to. You really can." Eccles had a history of "flying off the handle" when faced with ridicule for being poor. But Napier assured her, "You're older now. You're more sensible about flying off the handle when they make fun of you. Come out to the Center, and we'll get you anything you need to go to school. Just be yourself." To which Eccles replied, "I don't think people'd like me if I was myself."

Eccles' anger began as a form of rebellion against humiliation and shame, but she did not have the cultural framework that would allow her to perceive this behavior as a defense of her pride and dignity. Instead, she viewed it as evidence of personal and cultural pathology. Eccles seemed to have accepted the idea that poverty and character flaws are inextricably linked. Being "herself," then, meant responding to humiliation with anger — and then being humiliated for her anger.

"I would just like something halfway decent," Eccles said. "I ain't used to nothing fancy — just something so when you lay down at night, you're warm."

Dolly Parton used her native culture to go out of the region and succeed. Annie Napier uses it to stay at home and fight. At the time of my interview with her, Kathy Eccles was at a crossroads. Would she use the culture and the support of her community to emancipate herself, or would she find a haven in the charity of her neighbors from the heartless, unchangeable world? As far as I know, Kathy Eccles didn't make it to school, and her house is still cold in the winter. N&T

Alessandro Portelli teaches American Literature at the University of Rome "La Sapienza," where he established an Appalachian study group and an exchange program with the University of Kentucky. His books, which include material from his Appalachian oral histories, include The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories *and* The Battle of Valle Giulia. *He also co-authored with Charles Hardy III the essay-in-sound, "I Can Almost See the Lights of Home," in* The Journal of MultiMedia History *(www.albany.edu/jmmh/vol2no1/v2.html).*

This is a version, abridged with the author's consent, of a longer unpublished essay.

Luminous Departure

After a poem by Wang Wei

No longer young, I ask for peace. Abandoning
The sharp gaze of a world that leaps and spins.
I've found no perfect way to live, and brood
About once more losing my heart along
This path I've made my life. But the wind
Blows firm behind my back, to push me on,
Soughing in the tulip poplars' flickering leaves
As I pace the breathy flow of Beaver Creek
Through local woods. Loosening my belt. A Southern
Moon through boughs of pines — the lamp by which,
Despite fatigue, I seek to pierce the gloom to find
My way. To find my way along the water's
Wordless flow. How, in life, to fail or glow?
A fisherman sings, as mist swallows the river.

— Dan Stryk

Dan Stryk teaches creative writing and world literature at Virginia Intermont College in Bristol, Va. He is the author of five collections of poems and prose parables, including The Artist and the Crow *(Purdue University Press) and a new collection of informal sonnets,* Taping Images to Walls *(Pecan Grove Press). Stryk is the recent recipient of a faculty development grant from East Tennessee State University to create a handpress collection of short poems and woodcuts with ETSU department of art and design faculty member Anita DeAngelis.*

Devil's Train

by Dave Payne Sr.

Salzburg, Austria. "This sumbitch is a brook trout," the Webster says. The fish lays sprawled across his huge wet palms, gasping from exhaustion. He cradles it as if it were a baby. Like us, the brook trout, West Virginia's state fish, is a newcomer to Europe, stocked here a century ago.

"Live long, my friend," he says as he releases it.

The Webster reaches into what is probably one of the last cans of Copenhagen snuff on the continent and puts a three-finger chew between his cheek and gum. He spits into the icy water, the fine, black snuff granules swirling in the current.

He casts his fly far upstream, sits on a rock, and returns to his pocket-size volume of *King Henry IV, Part One,* glancing upwards occasionally at his drifting fly.

We see an Austrian man upstream, casting. He stands there, wading thigh-deep in the chilly water, the hem of his green wool coat skimming the misty surface. We wave. He walks toward us.

"Gruß Gott," I say.

The man hacks phlegm into the water. The thick, yellow clump floats downstream, the swirling current tearing at it. A minnow inspects it, sucks the clump into its mouth, and swims away.

The man says his name is Heiko and tells us matter-of-factly that this isn't a stream at all but a big medieval ditch that they used to use for flushing human feces from Salzburg's city streets and into the Salzach River.

Heiko casts his fly back out in the stream. A trout takes it the instant it hits the water.

He sets the hook, his American-made Plueger fly reel clicking as he reels in slack. He fights the fish for several minutes, playing it delicately. It is a big brown trout, swimming in shrinking concentric half circles as Heiko reels it in.

With our unlimited train passes, traveling was as simple as getting on a train. With them, we had been able to poach trout all across Europe and, with any luck, we'll be able to replenish our depleted snuff supply.

The hair-thin tippet connecting the fly to the fly line breaks. The trout streaks away, leaving floating a tangle of line and tippet at Heiko's feet.

Heiko wipes a bead of sweat from his forehead and lights a cigarette. "It is only right," he says in English, "that the fish must win sometimes."

"I suppose so," I say.

As Heiko untangles the thick clump of floating line, we walk a bit upstream and resume fishing. Aquatic insects rise to the surface, morphing from pupas into adult flies. They drift helplessly, drying their wings in the morning sun, preparing for their first flight. Trout gorge themselves upon the helpless insects.

"I was meaning to tell you," the Webster says, as he casts upstream, "I was talking to this guy in the Austria Tabak this morning. He said that you could buy snuff in Budapest."

"We're there," I say. "Thursday morning after class lets out." With our unlimited train passes, traveling was as simple as getting on a train. With them, we had been able to poach trout all across Europe and, with any luck, we'll be able to replenish our depleted snuff supply.

The Webster sits down on a rock and resumes reading, occasionally glancing upwards at his drifting fly.

Budapest, Hungary. I'm walking the cobblestone streets here and can't believe my luck. I've paid the equivalent of $8 for a Big Mac meal in Innsbruck and three bucks for a can of Coke in Berchtesgaden, Germany. Now I'm getting even.

The sidewalks are the center of commerce — and socks, the hot sellers. I buy

a pair for myself, hand-knitted acrylic-looking socks for a dime, postcards for a nickel, Cokes for a quarter, and find a couple of brand-spanking new Johnny Cash and Led Zeppelin tapes for $1. Hell, yeah.

Standing at the edge of the cobblestone street, I put in a chew of Copenhagen snuff, scraping the bottom of the cardboard can carefully, so as not to scratch off the flakes of wax. The stones in the street are not the smooth hand-cut stuff of Germany's and Austria's medieval streets, but boulders — craggy, ill-fitting, blister-your-feet and damn-near-knock-you-down-when-you-walk stone. The rustbucket cars rattle on their worn springs as they putter along, their ancient exhaust pipes spurting noxious fumes.

There's an old man's Mercedes up ahead, its driver's door held by wire. He drifts it into an intersection, bumping the clutch, trying to start it.

I run out to his car and push on the rear bumper. A well-dressed man in his mid-twenties helps. The Mercedes starts, idling roughly.

The young man starts speaking to me in French. I shrug my shoulders. He starts speaking in fluent German.

"Ich spreche English besser," I say.

"That was very nice of you to help that old man," he says. "He is my grandfather, and I am thankful for your assistance."

"No problem," I say.

"Where are you from?" he asks.

The two guys working on the car jump in front of us, blocking our way. Another comes from across the street and stands to our side. I turn around. A fourth man stands behind us.

"Elkview, West Virginia. America."

"How much do I owe you?"

"Nothing," I say. "Glad to help."

"At least let me buy you a cup of coffee. My aunt owns this coffee shop over on the next street." We walk on, with him leading the way. The street is relatively empty, except for two scruffy guys peering under the hood of a rusty Mercedes that could have been Hitler's staff car and another guy walking on the other side of the street.

The two guys working on the car jump in front of us, blocking our way. Another comes from across the street and stands to our side. I turn around. A fourth man stands behind us.

"Do you have hashish, *falsch* marks, or dollars?" he asks.

"Hell no," I say.

"This man is simply here visiting," the young man who promised the coffee said. "He has done nothing. You should let us be on our way."

Another man takes out his wallet and flashes an obviously fake badge. "We are police," he says.

"Bullshit," I say. My punch surprises him. It is a good hook, landing square on his nose, smashing it.

"You sumbitch," I say, as he lies dazed, blood spewing from his twisted nose. The others stand motionless for a moment, shocked by my boldness.

I kick the next largest one in the groin and run. They, except for the man lying on the sidewalk, clutching his groin, give chase.

I duck down an alley, overturning garbage cans in their paths. I turn around. The man who offered the coffee chases me also. He is the closest behind, but the others have fallen back out of sight.

I run through a slow-moving crowd on a brick pedestrian street for a couple blocks, lined with tourist-trap shops. I turn around. I think I've lost them.

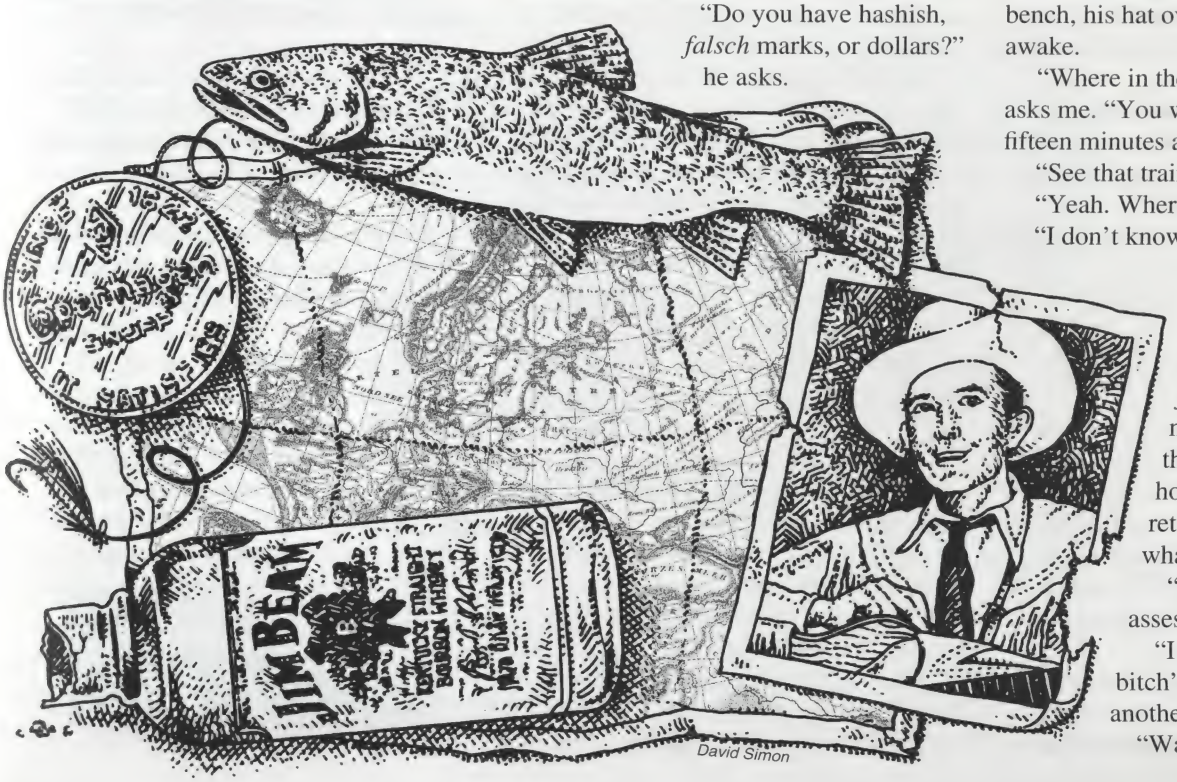
When I finally get inside the train station, I see the Webster sprawled along a bench, his hat over his eyes. I smack him awake.

"Where in the hell have you been?" he asks me. "You were supposed to be here fifteen minutes ago."

"See that train on the next platform?"

"Yeah. Where in the hell is it going?"

"I don't know, but we're taking it."



David Simon

We find an empty second-class smoking cabin inside, just as the train starts moving. We sit down on the twenty-year-old upholstery, riddled with cigarette burns. I explain to him what happened.

"Did you whip their asses?" he asks.

"I broke this one sumbitch's nose and smashed another's nuts," I say.

"Want to go back and get the

others?" he asks. "I'll watch your back."

"Hell no," I say.

The Webster takes a can of Copenhagen out of his pocket and packs it, his index finger noisily striking the metal lid. He gets himself a chew and hands me the can.

"Did you find any snuff?" I ask.

"No, but this cigar shop owner said they eat it like candy in Sweden."

It's settled. On the word of a cigar shop owner, we plan to travel a thousand miles.

Munich, Germany. We board the train to Copenhagen and walk the entire length of it, looking for an empty compartment. We finally find one in first class.

We sit there sipping Jim Beam until a conductor makes us go back. We go to a second-class smoking compartment. A man takes up two of the three seats on one side. He looks Hispanic but has blue eyes.

The Webster and I pass the Jim Beam back and forth, loudly talking about women and trout, hoping he'll get annoyed and leave. He doesn't. He breaks the paper seal on a bottle of scotch instead.

We start singing. "Copenhagen, it makes your dentist queasy. Copenhagen, you can see it in my smile. Copenhagen, quitting's not that easy. Copenhagen, it'll drive your woman wild." Soon he joins in, singing the only word he understands: "Copenhagen."

"My girl thought she would surprise me," we sing, "when she slipped me her tongue, but her surprise was waiting there between my cheek and gum."

"Copenhagen," sings our trio. We stop singing to drink.

"Gehst Du nach Copenhagen?" he asks.

"Nein," I say. *"Wir reisen nach Helsingborg, Sweden."*

The man's name is Johannes, he says. In Brazil, he was once a boxing champion, he says. He pulls this magazine from his briefcase and shows us a picture of him a few years younger and many pounds lighter, standing over a dazed opponent. He says he's now an insurance agent in Chemsee.

"I eat pies now," he says jokingly in broken English, pointing at the picture, then at his bulging belly. We laugh and sip our whiskeys. We pull some cans of cheap Austrian beer to chase.

The Webster pulls out of his backpack a small cassette player, which he used to tape lectures. He pops in a cassette of Hank Williams, who sings his tortured soul out as we throw crumpled cans on the floor.

"The devil's train is long and black," Hank moans, "it rides on rails of fear. It's heading for destruction now …"

The Webster is slapping my face. It is still dark outside. The floor is covered with a heap of trash, candy bar wrappers, and crumbled Pringles potato chips. There's an eerie silhouette of the Webster clean, marking the spot where he dropped.

"Did you find any snuff?" I ask.
"No, but this cigar shop owner said they eat it like candy in Sweden."
It's settled. On the word of a cigar shop owner, we plan to travel a thousand miles.

"That fat bastard stole our fly rods and my Hank tape," the Webster says, still slapping me.

We run from car to car, looking in each compartment. We find Johannes passed out in an empty first-class cabin. Our fly rods are there beneath his head.

The Webster kicks his head, freeing our rods, then takes the Hank Williams tape from the big man's shirt pocket. I catch a glimpse of the cover photo: Hank leaning on a jukebox. Johannes mumbles. The Webster tries to kick him again, but I block the blow with my foot.

I inspect the rods. They are unhurt. "Let's get out of here," I say.

"What the German word for a weasel's dick?" he asks.

"What?"

"You heard me."

I think for a minute. "I think *Wieselpenis* should work," I say.

A minute later, the Webster emerges from the compartment, smiling.

"What did you do?" I whisper. "You didn't kill him, did you?"

"Hell no, but when he wakes up and looks at himself in the mirror, he'll know not to mess around with Elk River boys."

We move to a compartment three cars back. A conductor barges in, screaming in German. I look at the Webster. "You bastard," I say. "You killed him."

He smiles.

The conductor leads us back to our old compartment and points at the trashy floor. He tells us we must pay 50 marks because we trashed it. I translate for the Webster.

"Hell no," he tells the conductor in his thick Webster County English. "We ain't paying a *Pfennig."*

I tell the conductor everything, except the part about us drinking bourbon, throwing beer cans on the floor, and the Webster kicking Johannes in the head. We offer to clean the compartment and pay nothing. He agrees.

"We do not tolerate stealing. I am sorry this happened to you," he said in German. He assured us Johannes would be turned over to the proper authorities. We're amazed that he actually believes us.

The train stops at a little station as we pick up beer cans and crumbled chips. I see Johannes outside, talking to police, scarcely able to stand. The officers cough, trying to suppress laughter.

I see the word *Wieselpenis* written backwards on Johannes' forehead.

The Webster pulls a black permanent marker from his pocket and smiles.

We ride a crowded ferry across the choppy, windswept Baltic Sea to Helsingborg, Sweden. Many people have dollies, stacked full with cases of Danish beer.

"Swedish beer must suck," the Webster says. I ask one of the Swedes. He says it does. The ferry docks in Sweden, spewing passengers and their cargoes of beer onto the empty streets.

Sweden is closed. The streets are empty. The stores are closed. The Webster says it is All Saints' Day. The only person on the streets is this homeless guy who finds a discarded lollipop on the sidewalk. He picks it up, inspects it, and puts it in

N. Fischman

his mouth. The only store open is a little shop at the dock.

"Do you have any snuff?" I ask the clerk.

"What is this, this snuff?" he asks. The Webster taps his fingers on the counter and mumbles profanities.

I pulled out my last can of Copenhagen, its contents nearly gone.

"Oh, yes, *snus,"* he said, smiling. He pronounced it "snoose." "We have this. We have *snus."* We buy two ten-can rolls for about $30 each.

We walk along the rocky beach until we reach a small cove, a small, narrow finger of the sea reaching inland. Here our campfire will be hidden.

We build a fire and study our *snus* cans, savoring our first look at foreign snuff in the firelight. It is packaged in cardboard cans, like our beloved Copenhagen. Two lions snarl on the plastic lid, a coat-of-arms between them. *"Grov Snus,"* it says on the side. On the bottom is stamped, *"Orsakar cancer Socialstyrelsen."*

I cast a fly, a bumblebee I tied myself, into the Baltic. It vanishes and reappears as it rides the dips and crests of choppy waves, its gentle cadence hypnotic.

The Webster pulls *Henry IV* and the cassette player from his backpack.

Hank Williams moans out of the single crackling speaker, his lonesome, wavering voice mixing with the sounds of the sea. "In the twilight glow I see her," he croons, "blue eyes crying in the rain."

"You know he died in West Virginia?"

"Who?" the Webster asks.

"Hank Williams. He died in the back of a car over around Oak Hill somewhere of a drug overdose. He already was about wasted away by then, addicted to morphine, whiskey, and pills."

"Sounds like the life," the Webster says as he opens up a can of the *snus.* We each take a chew. It reeks and tastes as bad as ramps smell when they cook.

"I didn't know that," he says. "Maybe his ghost is still somewhere in Fayette County, his tormented soul writing songs from beyond the grave."

"I hope he finally got some peace," I say as I put a pinch of the *snus* between my cheek and gum. "This snuff is nasty," I say, starting to spit it out.

"Naw," the Webster says, spitting for emphasis. "This is cultural enlightenment."

"What did you do," I whisper. "You didn't kill him, did you?"

"Hell no, but when he wakes up and looks at himself in the mirror, he'll know not to mess around with Elk River boys."

The sun dips below the horizon, and the Webster, his *snus*-filled cheek bulging like a hamster's, reads his Shakespeare by the fire.

The air becomes cold, and I button up my coat. The sea, however, is comfortably warm, beckoning to me. "Love is like a dying ember," Hank's voice echoes across the cove, "where only memories remain."

I cast my fly into the choppy sea. As it drifts, I fall asleep.

I'm back in West Virginia, at a spot where Laurel Creek flows around a giant boulder, a chunk of a once craggy mountain peak eroded to a stump over the epochs. A gentle breeze filters through the trees, carrying maple seeds that spin like little helicopters as they crash into the stream. My fly rides up and down upon wind-driven waves, the gentle cadence hypnotic. A brook trout rises to the surface, sipping my fly into its mouth.

I fight the trout for several minutes, it stretching the fragile 8x tippet. I land it and put it in my creel basket.

The fish stands erect on its tail, bracing itself upright with its pectoral fins. It peers at me through the wicker. A tear trickles down its jaw.

A half-drunk man, scarecrow thin with sunken eyes, puts his hand on my shoulder and winks at the trout. "Son," he says, his Alabama tenor voice wavering, "the fish must win sometimes."

I awaken as my fly disappears in a violent splash of briny froth. I set the hook, fight the fish for a moment, and land it. It is a weird fish, with spiny dorsal fins and bulging red eyes. Neither the Webster nor I can figure out what in the hell kind of fish it is.

"Looks like it would be good eating," the Webster says. "I don't know about you, but I'm pretty damn hungry."

"No," I said, releasing the fish back into the sea. "The fish must win sometimes." N&T

As a 10-year-old in Elkview, W.Va., Dave Payne Sr. set some formidable life goals for himself: to find the source of the Elk River, chew Copenhagen snuff in Copenhagen, and travel to Liechtenstein. He has actually been able to cross all these off his list. Payne earned a degree in writing and history from Alderson-Broaddus College in Philippi, W.Va. During his senior year, he studied in Salzburg, Austria. Now he lives in South Charleston, W.Va., with his wife, Julie, and children, Audrey and David II.

Offering, Day of the Dead

Drawn from dark woodland by candlelight, stark
owl's eye in pine windowsill, each autumn
like color in leaves your resin soul sparks
incense on table-spread of marigolds.
Through window's thin crevice with wind that numbs
my bones beneath your quilt, you till my spine
like a funeral handshake—here to fold
breathless around flowers and bread—table
set with candles and collard greens, enshrined
over scarecrow tablecloth, cumbersome
under the tray of candy sugar skulls.
The photograph centerpiece of your face
looms in candlelight incense, hallowed lull
remembered, pale offering to death's grace.

—Jason Pettigrew

Jason Pettigrew grew up in the small town of Bean Station, Tenn., and now lives in Knoxville where he teaches high school Spanish. A recent graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., Pettigrew wrote this poem for his grandmother.

Nancy Fischman

Reviews

Death, Child, & Love
by Edward Francisco
Walker Publishers
Knoxville, Tenn. - 2000
$17.95 (paper)

Someone once said that instead of offering answers, poets hang questions on the page. An editor, teacher, and prize-winning poet living in Knoxville, Tenn., Edward Francisco holds true to that precept in *Death, Child, & Love* as he examines, through memory and observation, the world he once knew and the world that daily surrounds him. Throughout the volume, his clear voice resounds with wonder, with playfulness, with curiosity, with compassion, and finally with pure love.

The book opens with a poem that addresses his mother and the subject of her suicide. A few pages later, in "Once," the poet circles back to his mother, imagining events before and after the moment depicted in a wartime photograph of her. The poet's father, son, and wife — along with his mother — figure in many of the collection's poems. His words tug at the threads of family, testing the warp and weft of the weave, trying its endurance against the lengthening years.

But things are not all serious for the poet — far from it. Among my favorite poems is "The Mousecatcher," a lighthearted look at the eternal battle to rid your house of one of nature's most abundant pests. The poet hopes the mouse realizes he (the poet) "would not harm him but for the / love of a woman," a fact acknowledged in the opening lines: "My wife says we cannot live together — she, / the mouse and I." The poem itself closes with a snap, not unlike that of a triggered mousetrap.

Speaking of poems that close exceedingly successfully, don't fail to read "Caveat to Vandals on Stealing My Grandmother's Gravestone." The language gathers momentum as purposefully as an Irish curse before culminating in the final line, an admonition against those whose "oblivious / mirth led [them] to remove the punctuation / from a life whose verdict is now / [their] sentence."

A couple of poems in the collection allow a close-in, wry look at self, as in these lines from "View from Bristol (TN) Motel":

> the man in the mirror...
> may be his own worst enemy but
> you must remind him to pray for
> a worthier adversary

In the poem "Most Things," the poet admits that even for someone who expects the worst, "most things don't happen."

Though grounded in the specificity of everyday life, many poems open into the metaphysical realm. For example, "After Abraham" may be the most thought-provoking poem in the collection as the poet parallels Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son with God's own sacrifice.

The poet takes us through the ordinary happenings of life as many of us know it, some of the poems growing out of events with a decidedly regional feel ("Dickering," for example, and "On Reading James Agee to My Students on Highland Avenue in Knoxville, Tennessee"); others could have been plucked from the world's headlines (such as "Siamese Twin" and "Upon Witnessing the Horror of a Picture of Starving Children in Sudan"). He deals with mowing, observing crows, contemplating snakes and sharks, coaching Little League baseball — and on to poems that have the power to transform.

In poems such as "For Richard Marius, My Teacher in Memory," the poet recalls sitting in Marius' classroom at the University of Tennessee, introducing his son to him, speaking on the phone with his teacher about cornbread crumbled into sweet milk, and being stunned to see him "talking / with [his] fingers to an old / deaf man ... on Cumberland Avenue." Finally he recalls "in the aftermath / of several family deaths," Marius' voice offering a blessing upon the poet's suffering. This evocation speaks to the reader's heart, stirring memories of one's own losses and of the unexpected kindnesses that blunt the edge of pain, a stirring that is intensified as the poem's conclusion echoes the blessing, this time from student to teacher.

Francisco closes the book elegantly with the poem toward which all the others reach, "Epithalamion," a love psalm to his wife.

Death, Child, & Love surprises and gives pleasure to the reader again and again.

— Connie Jordan Green

Connie Jordan Green is a poet, a newspaper columnist, and an award-winning children's author who lives in Lenoir City, Tenn. She has taught writing classes at the University of Tennessee and teaches for community groups.

This Rock
by Robert Morgan
Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, N.C. - 2001
$24.95 (hardcover)

Robert Morgan's newest novel opens with his character Ginny Powell remarking of her two sons, "Muir was the buildingest boy you ever saw, from the time he was little. He was different from Moody from the beginning. Moody was always running and playing and chasing chickens or the cat, the way any boy does." In Appalachian North Carolina during the Depression, the two brothers find themselves struggling with their pending manhood, with their sense of meaning in life — an idea clearly expressed by one's vocation during the era — and with each other.

Family life, a deep kinship to nature, and hard work in rural Appalachia have served as the themes for Morgan's past work. And while *This Rock* does indeed draw upon those subjects again, it would be simplistic to say those themes — specifically nature and hard work — are the predominant ones in this novel. Instead, *This Rock* is an ambitious undertaking that sets out to explore not just brotherly love and familial ties, but also how young men wrestle with their identities, their dreams, and their impatience to establish a foundation in their lives.

In Muir, Morgan gives us a responsible younger brother, stifled by his own dreams of leaving Green River and the mountains, of preaching, of building, of making a lasting impression upon the land and people in his life. His older brother, Moody, is an arrogant, hateful, and often spiteful individual who runs liquor across the state line, who foregoes

his responsibilities to the family, and sets out on a slow path of self-destruction. Moody's anger and hostility, the origins of which are never fully explained, are released in fits of drunken stupor and defiance aimed at Muir. It is in the context of these two different lifestyles that a tenuous relationship between the brothers exists, with each silently challenging the other's way of life.

After a failed attempt to win over the heart of Annie Richards, Muir is walking with her up from the river when they see Moody drive by. Moody offers to give her a ride home, and Muir protests. A nasty exchange takes place, and then Muir tells us, "Annie climbed into the car before I could say anything. I was going to tell Moody to get out of our way. But she got in and slammed the door. Moody revved up the motor, and as he pulled away, the wheels spun on the gravel and flung rocks back at me. A rock hit me in the knee, and the tires made two troughs of dust as he went down the road. I watched as the Model T bounced on the ruts and washboard until it was out of sight around the bend."

The scene is important in that the very crux of *This Rock* is Muir's constant failures in his endeavors, though they are made with great (but unsustained) effort, and what seems to be Moody's easy and immoral choices that bring him happiness. Of course, this happiness is an illusion, and Muir's failures show his undying determination to better himself. The brothers' relationship reflects how hard it is to hold a grudge against family members for their faults (and for qualities they don't possess) and how impossible it is to change them.

Morgan's acute ability to recognize this and his strength as a storyteller allow each page to be filled with palpable tension between the two. Their anger and disdain is so sharply detailed it could cut the very trees along the mountains of Green River. Sentence after sentence, Morgan places the reader with Muir in fields of fading sunlight watching Annie wash her hair, with Ginny finding Moody beaten and bloody in the woods, and in thickets along the edges of their home. In these moments, Morgan transforms us from readers of fiction to participants.

However, this is too often offset by the author's obvious intrusions into the story that at times leave you with a sense you've sat through the kind of contemptuous sermons Morgan condemns in his novel. For example, on preparing to preach for the first time, Muir finds himself agonizing over the details and delivery of his sermon. "Now the thing about worry is that it can't do you much good. For worry just wears you down and don't help in the least bit. But you can't just turn worry off like a spigot. Worry ain't something you can do much to control. Worry creeps up on you at night while you're laying in bed and crawls right into your head. And worry soaks its way into whatever you're thinking about in the daytime."

On the surface, this is an excellent observation about how people worry over forces, circumstances, and decisions affecting their life that they can't control. In the context of the novel, however, it is a didactic way of the author's informing us how keen his eye is. The comments about the nature of worry are unnecessary because Morgan the storyteller has already used the drama of the narrative to make us aware of Muir's trepidations. He has shown us those trepidations; he doesn't need to tell us about them.

At times, *This Rock* doesn't trust us to "get it," as if Morgan would like to ask, "Did you get all that?" and even more, "Did you understand all that?" These types of passages allow the story to collapse underneath its own wisdom and brilliance — for it is filled with both. Throughout the reading of *This Rock*, you are assured Morgan knows the feelings that betrayal, love, heartache, and envy can cause over a lifetime, but his beautiful writing and ability to document the emotions of family and people become cluttered often, allowing us to see his hand present throughout the story. This inability to express himself subtly leaves you wishing you'd been given some credit for experiencing and understanding those feelings too.

— Michael Croley

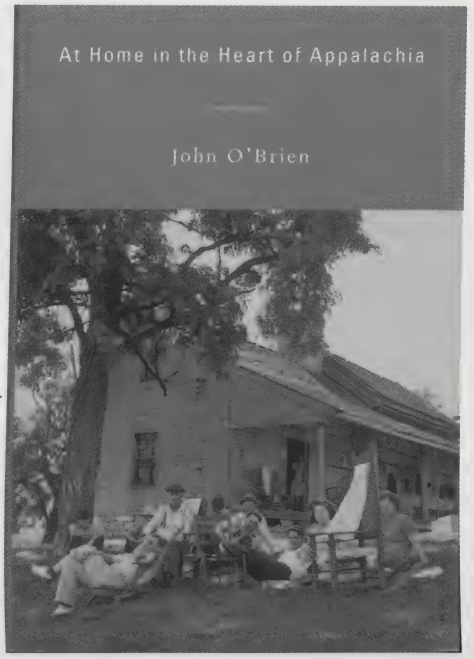
Michael Croley grew up in Southeastern Kentucky and graduated from Western Kentucky University. He is a freelance writer living in Richmond, Va.

At Home in the Heart of Appalachia
by John O'Brien

Alfred A. Knopf
New York - 2001
$25.00 (hardcover)

How do you embark on a journey of self-understanding and discovery? For John O'Brien, that journey begins as an ethnographic remembrance, a memoir of the past that created his present. In particular, O'Brien focuses on his father's sometimes intentional, and sometimes unintentional, influence on his own life. *At Home in the Heart of Appalachia,* winner of the 2001 Weatherford Award, chronicles the people, the land, and the culture responsible for making a man.

Although the author had been born and raised in Philadelphia, home for generations before him was Piedmont, W.Va. His father, James O'Brien, had left West Virginia in the early 1940s, ostensibly to find work but also, his son suspects, to escape the pain of the suicide of James' own father. James O'Brien often piled the family into their old Plymouth for long treks back home to the mountains. The author remembers the rides as tedious, writing that after long hours in the car, "sensing the loss of motion, we all wake up and untangle." In 1984, after having



Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf

lived in various places around the country, O'Brien comes home for good with his own wife and children, moving to Franklin, W.Va., two hours south of Piedmont. There he seeks to untangle not only this elusive place called Appalachia but also to decipher his own history.

O'Brien, the only college-educated person in his family, is considered the black sheep for "gettin' above his raisin'." His education and various places of residence prior to moving "home" to West Virginia with his own family are mostly attempts to escape "what has been called Appalachian fatalism — a profound sense that you are fundamentally inferior and that life is absurd and hopeless." His own desperation to get away from this determinism drives a wedge between him and his parents. The parent-son relationship dies long before his father does, and relationships with his siblings are often strained at best.

Concluding that traveling to Philadelphia for his father's burial would only exacerbate family tensions, the author returns to Piedmont the day after James' death, steeled with the resolve to understand place, people, and purpose. Since his own move back to the mountains some 10 years before, he has been trying to define Appalachia. The chapters that fall between O'Brien's initial description of his father and his last thoughts on his father's death explore the culture of this place.

O'Brien deftly paints vivid pictures of the land itself and describes the various missionary invasions of Appalachia. Yet at the same time, he finds himself wondering *where* in fact Appalachia is. One fall evening, he drives to the top of Spruce Knob, the highest point in West Virginia. "I declared myself the Emperor of Appalachia," he reports wryly. "Now that I had a kingdom, all I had to do was find the damn place."

After wrestling with questions about the origin and idiosyncrasies of Appalachia,

In Brief

The Boy from the Tower of the Moon by Anwar F. Accawi (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999; $23 hardcover). In this memoir, University of Tennessee professor Anwar Accawi lovingly renders his boyhood in the small village of Magdaluna, Lebanon. Readers may be pleasantly surprised by the parallels that exist between Accawi's Middle Eastern village and life in parts of Appalachia: reliance on extended family, independent and interdependent communal life, and loyalty to a familiar landscape. (See Anwar Accawi's essay, "Fear," beginning on p. 9.)

Country Music Annual 2001 by Charles K. Wolfe and James E. Akenson, eds. (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2001; $20 paper). The second volume of this annual continues the editors' efforts "to provide a national venue for new writing about country music." Ten scholarly and engaging essays include discussions on early country and bluegrass musicians, gospel songs and singers, and the connections between music and two cultural forces — cable television and NASCAR.

Earthly by Michael McFee (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press, 2001; $12.95 paper). This is the sixth collection of poems from Michael McFee, poet/editor/teacher and final judge for *Now & Then's* 2002 Poetry Competition. In his trademark accessible style, McFee's poems record a life lived in the church, the public school system, and a nuclear family in the North Carolina mountains. Also characteristic of McFee is the fact that the poems resonate with the deeper questions of losing parents, aging, and the making of poems.

Fearless Jack by Paul Brett Johnson (New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2001; $16 hardcover). Award-winning illustrator and children's book writer Paul Brett Johnson interprets this 600-year-old Jack tale with an Eastern Kentucky twist. (Johnson grew up in Knott County, Ky.) The boy-hero and his dog whack a swarm of yellow jackets, capture a wild boar, tangle with a grizzly bear, and trap a unicorn. Johnson's text is a delightful recreation of mountain speech, and his energetic paintings are richly detailed and laugh-out-loud funny.

*Greenback Dollar: The Music of Clarence "Tom" Ashley, 1929-1933 (*County Records, P.O. Box 7405, Charlottesville VA 22906; CD 3520, 2001; $16.97). Clarence "Tom" Ashley, the legendary Tennessee old-time musician, began his recording career in 1928. His extensive repertoire derived from an early American mixture of white and black musical styles and instruments. Ashley popularized such folk standards as "Corinna, Corinna" and "House of the Rising Sun" and directly influenced the careers of Roy Acuff and Doc Watson.

W.R. Trivett, Appalachian Pictureman: Photographs of a Bygone Time by Ralph E. Lentz II (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2001; $35 paper). Trivett's photographs of life in the Beech Mountain, N.C., community are in sharp contrast to the images captured by well-known artists of the era like Doris Ulmann and Bayard Wooten. Trivett was a mountain farmer who took up professional photography in his spare time as a way to supplement his income. His portraits, historian Lentz argues, record a fashionable, literate, and modern people living in Avery and Watauga counties in the 1920s and 1930s.

Finally, two books illustrate the influence of Jewish culture on particular Appalachian places. Wendy Low Besmann's *A Separate Circle: Jewish Life in Knoxville, Tennessee* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001; $16 paper) uses interviews and documentary sources to trace the history of a thriving Jewish community. Stella Suberman's *The Jew Store* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books, 2001; $13.95 paper) is a family memoir about life as the only Jewish shopkeepers in the small Tennessee town of Concordia.

— Marianne Worthington

Marianne Worthington is Now & Then's *reviews editor.*

he ultimately decides "the tug and maul of being alive is no different in Appalachia than it is anywhere else." He notes that the locals often don't think they live in Appalachia at all. Appalachia is less a place, he concludes, and more a state of mind.

There is a culture at work that has helped to shape both the author and his father. O'Brien uncovers these cultural truths delicately, almost accidentally, during his explorations of Piedmont and Franklin. He concludes that "life in the southern mountains has a deep, rich center, but there is a downside to Appalachian culture, just as there is to any culture." He searches Appalachia's deep rich center as well as its downside for clues that will allow him to answer the question: "What has being Appalachian meant to my father, to my grandfather, and to me?" His passion for "subsistence" fishing — in other words, catching bass and trout for the table, his embarrassment over the culture's complacent acceptance of socioeconomic class, his appreciation for small-town simplicity, and his fear of what he terms "Appalachian fatalism" are all truths from his past that shape his present and future.

O'Brien moves effortlessly from past to present in his account, almost to the point that the reader no longer distinguishes between "then" and "now." He does not pigeonhole Appalachia; he lets the land and its people tell their own stories. These stories and their meanings are dynamic. Although he does not make amends with his father, he makes amends with the culture. Perhaps the most important truth in the journey of self-discovery is his reminder that while places and even people may *appear* unchanging, their "meaning will not hold still."

Jessica R. Faught

Jessica R. Faught is a master's degree student and teaching assistant in communication studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The Serpent Handlers: Three Families and Their Faith

by Fred Brown and Jeanne McDonald

John F. Blair
Winston-Salem, N.C. - 2000
$19.95 (hardcover)

Mention religion in Appalachia, and inevitably someone brings up the practice of serpent handling. As people warm to the discussion, comments range along a continuum. At one extreme, you find genuine interest in the worship practice and respect for the individuals for whom the custom constitutes a vital part of faith and life. At the other extreme, outright mockery or sensationalistic journalism rears its ugly head.

In *The Serpent Handlers: Three Families and Their Faith,* Fred Brown and Jeanne McDonald provide a respectful, engaging study of those who handle serpents as they worship God. The husband-and-wife team of Brown and McDonald possess unique qualifications for the task. Both are skilled and renowned writers. McDonald is an award-winning fiction author, and Brown is an award-winning feature writer for *The Knoxville (Tenn.) News-Sentinel*. Brown also knows the members of three serpent-handling families, not as curiosities to be chronicled nor as subjects to be studied, but as friends. When the well-known preacher Punkin Brown died after being bitten in a service, Brown was the only journalist allowed to attend the funeral.

The Serpent Handlers chronicles the lives and beliefs of three families: the Brown family of Cocke County, Tenn.; the Coots family of Middlesboro, Ky.; and the Elkins family of Jolo, W.Va. All of the families have long been involved with following the signs of Mark 16:17-18 (e.g., handling serpents, drinking deadly liquids, laying hands on the sick) and have provided crucial leadership for the movement. Each family has also experienced more than its share of successes and failures, miracles and tragedies, both in life and in faith.

Brown and McDonald divide their book into three almost equal sections, with each section featuring a family. A brief history and contemporary evaluation of the family's county of residence introduces each section. The authors feature the major figures in each family, providing a brief biographical sketch of each individual but then allowing each person to speak of his or her life and faith through lightly edited interview transcripts. Each section concludes with a description of the church the family attends, placing the reader in a typical worship service.

Back in Print ...

Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area by Harry M. Caudill (Ashland, Ky.: Jesse Stuart Foundation, 2001; reprint Boston: Little, Brown, 1963; $15 paper). Harry Caudill's powerful polemic.

Sourwood Tales by Billy C. Clark (Ashland, Ky.: Jesse Stuart Foundation, 2001; reprint New York: Putnam, 1968; $15 paper). A collection of 18 stories.

The Frontiersmen by Allan W. Eckert (Ashland, Ky.: Jesse Stuart Foundation, 2001; reprint Boston: Little, Brown, 1967; $15 paper). Historical narrative.

Fools' Parade by Davis Grubb (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee, 2001; reprint New York: World Pub. Co., 1969; $19.95 paper). A Depression-era tall tale.

Crum by Lee Maynard (Morgantown, W.Va.: Vandalia Press, 2001; reprint New York: Washington Square Press, 1988; $16.50 paper). A coming-of-age novel.

The Ballad Book of John Jacob Niles by John Jacob Niles (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2000; reprint New York: Bramhall House, 1961; $30 paper). A song collection.

Come Back to the Farm by Jesse Stuart (Ashland, Ky.: Jesse Stuart Foundation, 2001; reprint New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971; $22 hardcover). Sixteen short stories.

Cudjo's Cave by J.T. Trowbridge (Tuscaloosa, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 2001; reprint Boston: J. E. Tilton and Co., 1864; $24.95) An East Tennessee Civil War novel.

— MW

Reviews

Other books have treated serpent handling, but *The Serpent Handlers'* approach of allowing those who follow the signs to speak for themselves free of any imposed interpretive system provides a unique and helpful perspective. The Bookworm & Silverfish bookshop in Wytheville, Va., recently recognized Brown and McDonald's excellent and fair work in this book by awarding them the 2001 Harry Caudill Award for Journalism.

If not for their commitment to following the signs in Mark 16:17-18 and the fact that they take their faith much more seriously than most, the individuals featured in the book would sound like members of many evangelical churches. They enjoy music in church, believe in miracles, practice Christian hospitality, and believe that God chastises his followers when they stray in order to bring them back. Their relationship with God is personal and intense, as evidenced by their desire to involve God in every decision in life. Through the practice of "fleecing," they ask God for a sign to confirm decisions, such as whether or not to take up serpents in worship or to home-school their children. Some experience and interpret dreams and visions, others concentrate on praying for those in need, and still others use their God-given musical talents for God's glory.

The picture of serpent handlers that emerges from Brown and McDonald's book is one of compassionate and passionate individuals who continue to be accepting of others despite direct and indirect persecution. *The Serpent Handlers* is neither an apologetic for the practice nor an appeal for new members. Brown and McDonald have provided a balanced, fascinating, and moving story of the lives and faith of three families and, in the process, reminded us again of the tenacity and centrality of religion in human life.

—Bob Dunston

Bob Dunston is professor and chair of the religion and philosophy department, Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky. He has taught the religion of Appalachia as part of several Elderhostel programs. In addition, he has completed a study comparing Appalachian and Biblical wisdom.

Alexis Close

Lunch at the Chinese-Italian Restaurant

Sandwiched between a beauty shop and Radio Shack
on the north bank of the Ohio River
in an old French town,
a failed pizza parlor reinvents itself
as a Chinese restaurant.
Painted on its walls, signed murals:
to the left, Rome's Coliseum,
the canals of Venice,
Pisa's tower leaning;
opposite, a white-capped chef
swirls a round of dough,
barefoot women, skirts raised,
stomp purple grapes for wine.
Above the serving window,
a green, twisting dragon curls
through clouds of Chinese writing.

From eleven until three you can fill your bowl:
Sesame chicken, Mango beef, Moo Goo Gai Pan.
Order Folgers with your wonton,
sip Pepsi with General Tso.
Sweet 'n Low and soy sauce socialize.

God bless America …
fortune's cookie split wide.
We bow to her language of wonder,
lucky in our multitudinous numbers,
one delicious nation, indivisible,
after all.

—Cathy Lentes

Cathy Lentes has had work appear in Appalachian Heritage, Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel, Blueline, *and* Riverwind. *Her poem, "Approaching Chester, Ohio," won* Now & Then's *2000 Appalachian Poetry Competition and will appear in April in an anthology of Ohio poems being published by the University of Akron Press to commemorate Ohio's bicentennial.*

Self Analysis: Freud in Western Kentucky

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were permanently lost. We often wished
we had you, Herr Doktor, in the vicinity.
There were things to talk over:
Why the slippage of the Now? How is birth
a trauma when we took to life like lovers?

Near the Appalachian foothills
liquids are not lucid. Our mutant fathers,
parched beyond recognition, came home
of clarity but in our mother's mother's gauzy
bed we dream of white trapdoors—
even Baptists need angels. But you wrote,
in German, for God's sakes,
that they meant menthol cigarettes, over-desperate
condensations of self love and fear over cock
cuttings. Women may read that! Why not
walk across the Atlantic and come here
and write about

the evil
that breaks down
our front porches, the lawns full
of nephews
stillborn and blue and buried
nameless, our fathers like badluck cemeteries
sinking hunchbacked into bourbon bottles
as fierce rains from Missouri force
their coalcars to grind
the caves' rocky mud,
tiny metal wheels spinning and locking,
lurching and crablike, then churning

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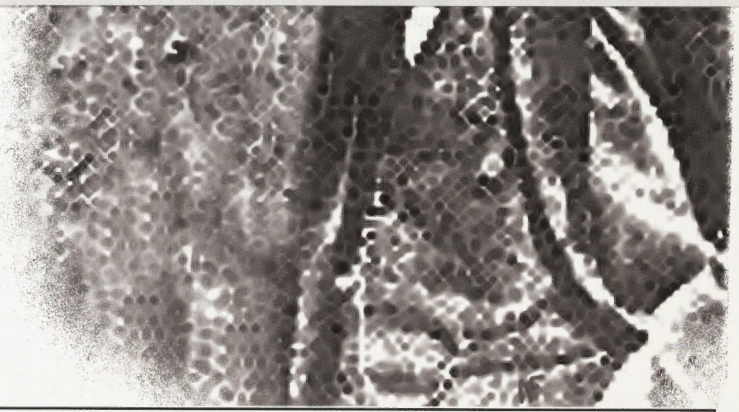

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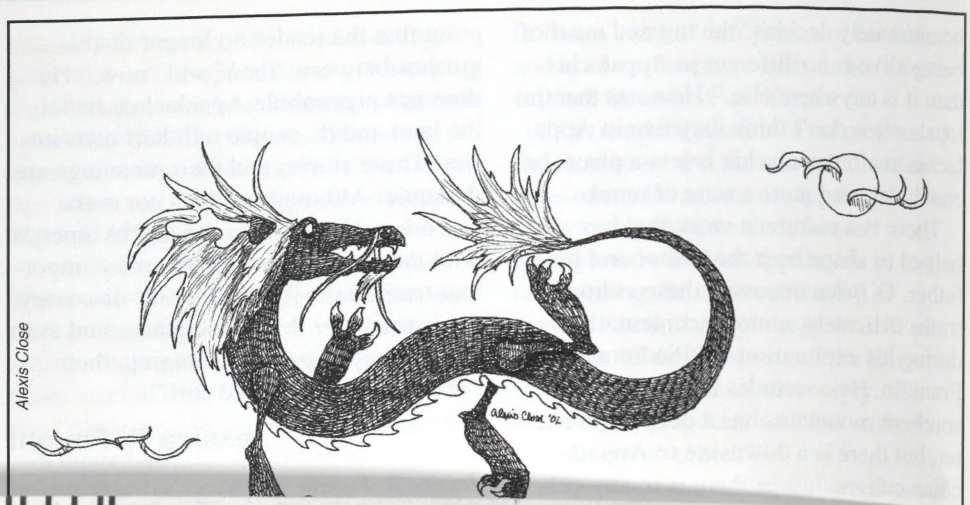

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"Now & Then captures the real spirit of Appalachia better than any other publication. I find news and features here that I never see anywhere else, plus wonderful fiction and poetry. I consider *Now & Then* indispensable reading for myself and for anybody else who truly cares about our region's rich heritage or about what's happening now."
Lee Smith

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Fred Chappell

"Now & Then keeps me in touch and informed, and is a must for anyone interested in the past, present, and future of the region."
Robert Morgan

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Sweet 'n Low and soy sauce socialize.

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a trauma when we took to life like lovers?

Near the Appalachian foothills
liquids are not lucid. Our mutant fathers,
parched beyond recognition, came home
at night blackened, angry
at the dead earth's failure to yield.
There were no tasty sisters waiting,
no patients nicknamed Lil Queenie,
as if they were royalty. In Kentucky
sofas were slept upon, two by two.

And so the days come, then go, then leave.
Our relatives are perfectly unable to remain
satisfied. We stay locked in trances.
One neighbor, Gladdie Dingaling, has thighs
like a man, made bold from the terrible terrain,
each customer less jagged, unlike our children.
She will hear our confessions
only when the line outside dwindles. She smothers us
with flatchested violence. The line
grows longer with each failed theory.

Piss on your Viennese practice: the rich
sport with illness, like college boys
playing blues guitar. In our pockets
we carry shreds of rope from an aborted
lynching: It brings us this spatchcocked luck.
Your science claims dividends
of clarity but in our mother's mother's gauzy
bed we dream of white trapdoors—
even Baptists need angels. But you wrote,
in German, for God's sakes,
that they meant menthol cigarettes, over-desperate
condensations of self love and fear over cock
cuttings. Women may read that! Why not
walk across the Atlantic and come here
and write about

the evil
that breaks down
our front porches, the lawns full
of nephews
stillborn and blue and buried
nameless, our fathers like badluck cemeteries
sinking hunchbacked into bourbon bottles
as fierce rains from Missouri force
their coalcars to grind
the caves' rocky mud,
tiny metal wheels spinning and locking,
lurching and crablike, then churning
upward, at last, trespassing
the scorched oval entrance, half
of the latent cargo spilling
out, black shards of ascendant gems.

—Michael Baker

Michael Baker has taught at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, and has managed restaurants in and around New York City for the last seven years.

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Gravity anomaly maps of the Atlantic Ocean courtesy of Delft Institute for Earth-Oriented Space Research, The Netherlands. On the World Wide Web at www.deos.tudelft.nl/altim/atlas/atlantic/grav_map.html.

Cape Verde Comes to Carolina

...Ess morna
E sonho di nha esperança
Qui já confessá-me
Qu'ma bô amor
Era falso, ô flor ...

—traditional Cape Verde song

Cesaria Evora's song on the radio
in Paris, New York,
Cuba's cane fields
a man weeps in his bed
at night in a small room
tries to remember the face
of a woman, open, not smooth,
or her back,
curved like the Cape Verde shore,
her voice above waves and wind,
how her smile made him feel gulls
in his chest.

Cesaria's singing
and in Carolina
a woman tries her tongue
at Creole, at Portuguese
listens as cars slow
for the curve near her house
of course, he won't come.
She thinks Cape Verde
looks good in pictures, those dry hills
angling into the other side of the Atlantic
would be something to see, yes, something
else to long for.

—Leslie M. LaChance

Leslie LaChance grew up in the Hudson River Valley of New York state. She currently lives in Southern Appalachia where she teaches English to international students at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

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